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# *Lead with a Servant Heart*

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*"The servant leader is a servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant--first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"*

-Robert Greenleaf  
*Servant Leadership*

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# *Introduction*

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So you are asked to assume a leadership role within a Christian faith community. A Sunday school teacher small group Bible study leader is needed and you accepted the request to lead the group. A congregation has called you to “pastor” their local church while working full-time in other employment. You were elected to a position of leadership on the church board, in the choir, on a committee, or to be the “head” usher.

A cross-cultural assignment may have taken you out of your comfort zone and the familiar, and you are experiencing behavior within the group that challenges you. And you don't feel qualified for the leadership assignment. In fact, you perhaps recommended others for the very position you have been asked to assume. Yet, when asked, and following prayer about the request, you felt an inward “nudge” to accept.

This book is for you and the people you are called to lead within a faith community. Techniques for leading will not be offered, nor will “easy steps” be outlined. Rather, a perspective is given – a vision of leadership for leading a faith community – providing for you principles to guide you, values to “drive” you as you work with others, and convictions you must internalize to be an effective Christian servant leader.

Three compelling convictions prod us as we explore this theme together.

Convictions about:

1. who we are as the People of God;
2. what we are called to do in the work of God; and
3. how we live together as the family of God.

These convictions are at the heart of servant leadership. They comprise the essence of the Servant's Song. These three cornerstones of Christian leadership - a vision about our identity, a passion about our vocation and an obsession about the faith community - are common threads that re-emerge throughout the course of this work.

As I was thinking about his book, I realized that to *become* an effective Christian servant leader, to become Christ-like, we need to expand upon the three cornerstones into motifs that guide our behavior as leaders. For many of us, adopting these motifs will constitute change in how we approach the task of leadership. Thus, I expanded my three cornerstones (vision, passion, and obsession) in the six motifs shown below.

I am coming to understand that if leaders are to assist “the led” to think and act Christianly, we must wholeheartedly embrace these servant leadership motifs around which this book is written:

1. The MOTIVATION for servant leadership... is grounded in a theology of ministry.
2. The LIFESTYLE of servant leadership... is characterized by a passion for Christ-likeness.

3. The PURPOSE of servant leadership... is biased toward effectively preparing the Body of Christ – the People of God – for mission and ministry.
4. The METHOD of servant leadership...is rooted in spiritual formation, shared vision, modeling and collaboration.
5. The PAIN of servant leadership ... is experienced in the tension between good and godly people over vision and values.
6. The EVIDENCE of servant leadership... is reflected in the qualitative growth of the led – individually and collectively.

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, and
- a sacramental community in and through which the grace of God flows.

The vision for this book focuses on the individuals who read these pages convictionally embracing the biblical model of "servant" as the driving force and organizing principle within individuals as they seek to lead a Christian community of faith. In the context of biblical and theological foundations, and from the perspective of spiritual, strategic, and skills formation, readers are invited to a lifelong pursuit of and commitment to personal and corporate understanding of Christian leadership and the unique relationship of Christian spirituality and the leadership responsibilities within a community of faith.

Fundamentally, I believe, effective leadership 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. Join with me as we further explore the concepts that are inherent in the Christian servant leader. They will characterize us at our best and convict us at our worst. Brother, sister, let me be your servant...

# *Theme One*

**THE MOTIVATION  
FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS  
GROUNDED IN A THEOLOGY  
OF MINISTRY.**

## *Theme One*

### **THEME ONE: THE MOTIVATION OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS GROUNDED IN A THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY.**

*Christian ministry is the extension of the service of Jesus in our world, incarnating the healing, "guiding, sustaining, reconciling work of Jesus in the lives of those with whom we work and live." - E. LeBron Fairbanks*

#### **OVERVIEW OF THEME STRUCTURE**

##### **Introduction: Leadership and the Spiritual Life**

- Servant Leadership for a Servant Community
- Defining Christian Leadership
- The Leaders Credo
- Conclusion

Since this course focuses on spiritual leadership, each theme and session is implicitly punctuated with a jarring question,

**If "in Christ all things are made new," then how does our relationship with Christ convert or transform our the way we lead?**

The first theme to be discussed probes the foundations of spiritual leadership with particular attention given to a biblical understanding of ministry within a Christian community. How is servant leadership expressed in a community of faith? Definitions will be discussed. Relevant scriptural passages will be pursued. A ministry model will be explored and key thoughts will provide a biblical perspective on the servant leader and his/her ministry to others. Spiritual leaders are those persons who increasingly open themselves to the actions of the Spirit and increasingly allow these actions to transform their thoughts, words, and deeds.

#### **Introduction: Leadership and the Spiritual Life**

During one year of my presidency of Mount Vernon Nazarene University, my wife and I were able to enjoy a three-month sabbatical from our work, to provide a break or change from our normal routine. The sabbatical year in the Bible refers to a year of rest for the land observed every seven years in ancient Judea. Today, a sabbatical leave is given for rest, travel, or research. My sabbatical became a time for me to look at my leadership ministry for the next ten years. I was intent on gaining the maximum use of my sabbatical.

During the first few weeks of my sabbatical I wrote the following words about the fundamental question I thought I needed to be asking myself. "How and where can I, in the next ten years, make the greatest impact for the Kingdom?" Soon, the right question came into focus: "How and where do I need to change, inwardly and in relationship to others, so that in the next ten years I become a more faithful witness for Christ, wherever God chooses to use me?" Through answering this question, I discovered living the spiritual life means:

- (1.) Identifying the presence of the Divine Spirit  
in our individual and communal lives;
- (2.) Listening with care to the Spirit's movements; and
- (3.) Responding with our whole being to what we hear.

Christian spirituality teaches us how to foster a life of holiness while recognizing that such a gift is ultimately only God's to give. Dr. Morris Weigelt and Dr. Dee Freeborn, in their book *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*<sup>1</sup>, identify spiritual formation as "the whole person in relationship with God, within the community of believers, growing in Christ-likeness, reflected in a Spirit-directed, disciplined lifestyle, and demonstrated in redemptive action in our world."

During my sabbatical, the following scriptures became very important to me!

<u>Matthew 6:33</u>	"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
<u>I Corinthians 2:13</u>	"We teach spiritual things spiritually."
<u>I Corinthians 2:16b</u>	"But we have the mind of Christ."
<u>II Corinthians 5:16a</u>	"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view."
<u>II Corinthians 4:7</u>	"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

It became apparent to me that focusing on God was the necessary first step to successful personal change and external impact. I needed to reinvigorate my PASSION for Christ.

Throughout this course, I encourage you to keep a journal to capture insights gained for your study of each theme. Pay particular attention to scriptural passages that become "foundation stones" for you as you seek to spiritually lead the People of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Freeborn, E. Dee, Janine Tartaglia and Morris Weigelt. *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*. Beacon Hill Press, 1994.



## **Servant Leadership for a Servant Community**

What constitutes success in our leadership ministry? Why is this question so important?

Is there a vision within the Christian community you serve regarding ministry, pastor and lay? Mobilizing a Christian community for ministry hinges on a radical commitment to our identity within the faith community as the People of God, brothers and sisters in Christ.

Effective leadership for ministry expression is grounded in biblical perspective. Organizational skills, of course, are needed. However, sharp skills without Christian motives can easily lead to manipulation. The primary orientation and motivation of our actions as Christian leaders must be deeply theological. They must include our passion for Christ.

How convictionally we reflect this passion as we lead will determine the degree to which our leadership will be judged "successful" in biblical perspective. In the Christian community, leadership and ministry are almost synonymous.

### **WHAT IS MINISTRY?**

In its briefest and most general understanding, ministry is "diakonia" or SERVICE. At it's very best; ministry is passionate service to others in Jesus' name. Certain words help us understand the various dimensions of Christian ministry--words like caring, sharing, growing, relating, teaching, and even confronting. Ministry in the New Testament perspective takes the form of holding the hand of a person engulfed in fear, listening intently to a person in trouble, crying with a person who is hurt, or embracing the individual who is grieving. It may include taking students or parishioners to the store for groceries, or confronting in love their lack of discipline or careless habits. Ministry encompasses the sharing of the Christian faith, or a verse of scripture with another in time of need. Christ in His ministry pursued all these and more with a passion beyond our understanding.

Christian ministry is the extension of the service of Jesus in our world, incarnating the healing, guiding, sustaining, reconciling work of Jesus in the lives of those with whom we work and live. If you are a Christian, you are called to Christian ministry.

Ministry understood in this broadest sense is the context for our specific ministry. We may be specifically called and gifted for pastoral ministry, teaching ministry, evangelism ministry, music ministry, or leadership ministry. But it is futile and self-defeating to seek to function within our specific calling *while ignoring the broader calling to serve others in Jesus' name.*

Jesus defined success in Christian ministry in terms of service or self-giving to others in the name and place of God (Matthew 25:30-34). Our responsibility as leaders is to passionately care for God's people as a shepherd does his sheep, leading and teaching them in the ways of God. Our leadership mandate is to motivate, equip, and enable the People of God to develop their gifts and give their lives in meaningful service to others in Jesus' name. Our ministry is helping others prepare for their ministries.

Being Christ-like in our passionate service, or Christian ministry, is a constant in major theological writings.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*<sup>2</sup>, lists seven expressions of ministry by which a Christian community must be judged and characterized.

**1. The Ministry of Holding One's Tongue**

"He who holds his tongue in check controls both mind and body," James tells us. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth..." is an admonishment from the Ephesian epistle. When this passage characterizes us, we will be able to cease from constantly criticizing the other person, judging him and condemning him, putting him in his particular place. We can allow the other to exist as a completely free person.

**2. The Ministry of Meekness**

This is "caring more for others than for self." "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought," Paul tells us in Romans 12:3. John tells us to make no effort to obtain the praise that comes only from God. He who serves must learn to think first of others.

**3. The Ministry of Listening**

The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists of listening. Listening can be a greater service to people than speaking.

**4. The Ministry of Active Helpfulness**

Simply assist others within the Christian community in external matters, big and small.

**5. The Ministry of Bearing (Supporting)**

"Carry each other's burden" is the challenge of Galatians 6:2. Bearing means forbearing and sustaining one another in love. Ephesians 4:2 commands us to "be humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

**6. The Ministry of Proclaiming**

This is the ministry of the word of God. Bonhoeffer does not mean the message of Scripture proclaimed in a formal setting such as in the worship service. He is referring to the free communication of the word of God from person to person. He is referring to that unique situation in which one person becomes a witness in human words to another, with Christian consolation.

**7. The Ministry of Authority (Leadership)**

Jesus states in Mark 10:43, "Whosoever wants to be great among you must be first your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave." This is the paradox of ministry. Jesus made authority in the fellowship dependent upon brotherly service.

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<sup>2</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1978.

For Bonhoeffer, these practical expressions of Christian ministry provide the *context* that our specific ministries must function within. This is particularly true as it relates to the specific ministry of leadership.

A study of the ministry of Christ reveals three salient features:

1. Christ – The Servant. His ministry was a servant ministry. “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give His life as ransom for many.” He demonstrated His service to His Father by doing the will of Him who sent Him, and to the people by accepting them as they were and meeting their needs, whether by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, or simply by making time to listen and be with the sinner, the outcast, or the disresponsible member of society.
2. Christ – The Teacher. His ministry involved teaching. He taught with authority. He was known as “Rabbi, teacher.” The proclamation of the gospel, the announcement of the kingdom to all who had ears to hear was conducted not only in word but also in deed. It was clear teaching, adapted to the needs of the listeners, and delivered in easy to understand illustrations and examples.
3. Christ – The Sacrifice. He was the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world by His sacrifice on the cross. He laid His life by His own free will in obedience to His Father. His ministry was essentially sacrificial and priestly.

If all Christians are called to be extensions of Christ, then the ministry of the People of God will be characterized by service, teaching, and sacrifice to the people with whom we come in contact.

Christian leadership is, I believe, humble service to others in the community of faith whose head is Christ for the purpose of enabling them, through modeling and teaching, to live their lives under the Lordship of Christ, and to understand, accept and fulfill their ministry to each other and their mission in the world.

## Leadership’s Effect on the Led

A question remains open regarding those being led. How can our ministry of Christian leadership enable *others* to fulfill *their* ministry to each other and *their* mission in the world? Leadership, for ministers of Christ, is known by the personalities it enriches, not by those it dominates or captivates. Are the people being served growing as Christians? Are they, themselves, becoming servants? These are crucial concerns for the leadership of God's people.

Robert Greenleaf, in his outstanding book, *Servant Leadership*<sup>3</sup>, suggests a thesis that those who are leaders must serve those whom they lead. Only those who serve, he believes, are fit for leadership. Though written for the secular audience, the book contains many thoughts on servant leadership similar to the words of Jesus.

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<sup>3</sup> Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press, 2002.

The late Dr. Harold Reed, former president of Olivet Nazarene University and The Reed Institute for the Advanced Study of Leadership, and author of the book, *The Dynamics of Leadership*<sup>4</sup>, reminds us that the quality of our leadership is largely based on our philosophy of life.

If our philosophy of life is based on a biblical theology of church and ministry, then **how** we lead, or our style of leadership will focus on the qualitative growth of the led as ministers of Jesus Christ, called to serve others in His name.

Understood this way, the Christian ministry is a *shared ministry* with every believer serving and supporting one another, using Holy Spirit-given gifts to stimulate personal and corporate growth and reconciliation in both the church and the world. Ministry, like missions, is a function and expression of the whole church. It is not something that only a few persons are called, trained and ordained to do, but a function of the People of God.

Perhaps the following outline of my model of ministry will summarize this discussion on ministry, and will conceptualize the relationship of the leadership ministry of the pastor-teacher to the ministry of the People of God whom he/she serves.

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<sup>4</sup> Reed, Harold. *The Dynamics of Leadership: Open the Door to Your Leadership Potential*. Danville, IL: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1982.

**Figure 1.1**

**The relationship between the ministry of the pastor/teacher and the ministry of the community of faith whom he/she leads.**

**GRACE** - Ephesians 2:8-9 We were dead. By grace through faith...now we are alive! God first loved the world. God initiates all activity for reconciliation and enables His children through grace to participate with Him in His ministry.

**CHURCH** - Ephesians 2:19-22 By grace we are incorporated into God's family and become: The People of God, The Body of Christ, and The Fellowship of the Spirit.

**MINISTRY** - II Corinthians 5:18; 9:12 The Church's mission is the continuing ministry of Jesus, the ministry of reconciliation..."As the Father has sent me, so send I you." God acts in the world through His People. The ministry of reconciliation is made known through the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

**SPiritUAL GIFTS** - I Corinthians 12:4-5 The ministry of reconciliation is expressed by each member of the church through specific concrete ministries as he/she exercises spirit given gifts and fulfills his/her calling (vocation) in the church and in the world through the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Outside the Faith Community

*Producing results by the Led*

Resulting in spiritual growth and Christian maturity.

Moving inactive Christians to the ministry of reconciliation.

Some are gifted as apostles, pastors, teachers, and evangelists.

To equip God's People

*The Leader's gifts interact with the Led*

With an understanding of what it means to be the People of God, how to live together as the family of God, and what we are called to do with our lives.

And to discover, develop and utilize their Spiritual gifts and to fulfill their calling or vocation in life.

for a lifestyle of devotion ↑, caring →, learning, ← and relating. ↻

through relating the gospel and faith to crucial life concerns

Producing maturity within the believers.

For works of service and the ministry of reconciliation in the world.

*Change among the Led*

Following the diagram above (Figure 1.1) full circle from Grace through the Leader interacting with the Led, through change among the Led, finally through Producing Results by the Led, it becomes clear our ministry of leadership is to prepare others for their ministries. Do you notice how the Led then begin to become integrated into the "Ministry" portion of the sequence of events?

### THE "SHARED VISION" OF MINISTRY

Vision has to do with seeing things clearly and at a great distance. In organizational and institutional thinking, it is seeing what others do not see. For the person with the "vision", the vision is a consuming, passionate, compelling inner picture. All leaders are supposed to have "vision." Shared vision and Christian leadership are very closely tied since the led are to be served by the leader. The leader shares the vision with the led. Fundamental for the Christian leader is not so much organizational "vision," but theological "vision."

What do we "see" in the people with whom we work? Do we see problems or possibilities? The present situation or the future potential? Some leaders focus only on the past. Some see only the present and say, "Why?" Others dream of things that never were, and say, "Why not?" Our challenge is to see beyond the past, or even the present with its problems, to "dream" or "see" redeemed individuals - all of whom are called to live as an extension of Jesus in their world, incarnating the healing, sustaining, reconciling work of Jesus in the lives of those with whom they work and live.

As leaders, we need - we must have - a consuming, passionate, compelling inner picture of:

- a. *Who* we are as the People of God.
- b. *How* we may live together as the family of God, and
- c. *What* we are called to do with our lives in the work of God.

And leadership is the *transference* of this vision!

We must transfer our vision of ministry to those for whom we have Christian care and responsibility, and they will in turn transfer their vision to others! To believe that all Christians - yes, even those with whom we work who sometimes make life so difficult - are *called* and gifted for the ministry of Christ is humbling, frustrating, demanding and necessary! More and more, we need to see ourselves as *equippers* of ministers. Unfortunately, most of us have been educated to be ministers, not to be enablers of ministers.

Shared ministry demands deep "seeing" and deep "visioning." Only the person who can see the invisible can do the impossible. Questions such as "what if..." and "why not..." ought to permeate our mindset regarding the Christians with whom we work. What if...they were all called to the Christian ministry? Why not...assume it is true and proceed accordingly!

Eldon Trueblood states it most clearly:

*Unless the layman is given solid teaching, his ministry, after an initial burst of freshness, will tend to degenerate into little more than a string of trite phrases linked to commonplace ideas and buttressed by a few sloppily quoted biblical passages. We must take the education of the laity with utter seriousness. Laypersons are not assistants to the pastor, to help him do his work. Rather, the pastor is to be their assistant; he is to help equip them for the ministry to which God has called them. The difference is as revolutionary as it is total. Half measures are worse than nothing. Our hope lies in making big plans, in undertaking to produce a radical change, in aiming high. Adult education is the big thing in the church. It is not a decoration; it is the centerpiece.<sup>5</sup>*

Only from this perspective will ministry be mutually understood and shared. Without this shared vision, ministry in and through the local church or theological institution is as impossible as a triangle with two sides. Ministry happens when the pastor and the congregation, administrator and students, leader and led have a vision of Christian ministry and pursue it together. The more consuming the vision, the greater the commitment to ministry.

We must be captured by this vision, which transcends ministry *to* the people and ministry *for* the people, to ministry *with* the people and ministry *by* the people. The shared vision of ministry demands a *passionate conviction* regarding ministry that sets out to do something about the insight. Our leadership ministry is helping others understand and develop their ministry. When those with similar vision are drawn together, something extraordinary occurs.

HOW, THEN, CAN WE COMMUNICATE A VISION OF MINISTRY THAT WILL BECOME A SHARED VISION?

Jesus challenges us in Luke 6:40, "When a student is fully trained he will become like his teacher." (Or his pastor or school president!) Ministry is always incarnated and enfleshed. Ministry must be lived out! But what is it about ourselves that we want our students, staff, or parishioners to catch from us? We want our people to catch from us a servant spirit, committed to *motivating, equipping and enabling them to serve others in Jesus' name*. We want to pass on our passion and vision, so in turn, they enter the ministry cycle. This is success for the Christian leader! This is what it means to be a servant leader!

What we are confronted with is a need to communicate a lifestyle that is distinctly Christian and self-giving at the core. How do you teach commitments, priorities, values, and spiritual disciplines? How do you teach a lifestyle?

"Follow me as I follow Christ." "You ought to follow my example." "Put into practice what you have learned, received or heard from me or seen in me." "We did this in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow." In II Thessalonians chapter 3, Paul gave these words to the Christians under his care with humility; we must do the same for those for whom we are responsible.

For Paul, a key way to "teach a lifestyle" was through personal example.

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<sup>5</sup> Trueblood, Elton. *Your Other Vocation*. PUBLISHER INFORMATION STILL NEEDED.

What leadership qualities must others see in us as institutional leaders, teachers, or pastors, if we are to effectively transfer our vision of ministry to them? Ephesians 4:25-32 provides for a servant leadership lifestyle. (See Theme Two for a more detailed elaboration of this lifestyle.)

Ephesians chapter four begins with the challenge to walk worthy of our calling as Christians. The characteristics of the person "walking worthy" follow the challenge. We are instructed to be gentle, humble, patient, and supportive of each other. In so living, we will "maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

But, as Christian *leaders*, how do we express gentleness, humbleness, patience, and supportiveness? The key principle is found in Ephesians 4:15 - "speaking the truth in love." The key concept is fleshed out in the following verses (4:25-32). We speak the truth in love:

1. Because as Christians *we are God's Family*. Therefore, we should speak truthfully, and not lie to one another (4:25).
2. Because, when we do not speak the truth in love, *Satan gets a foothold in our lives*. Therefore, we should not postpone dealing with our anger, and should deal with our differences in a Christian way (4:26-27).
3. Because of the *power of words to heal and affirm*. Therefore, be supportive and uplifting, and avoid negative talking (4:29).
4. Because *we have been forgiven in Christ*. Therefore, be forgiving, and do not hold grudges and become resentful (4:31-32).

Paul is not so much talking about administrative techniques but Christian attitudes underlying our actions and activities. We are co-laborers together in the body of Christ (4:25). We function with others out of an "I-Thou" frame of reference. The people with whom we work are God's own creation.

When we ignore our "family" relationship with Christ and treat those with whom we work as "means to an end,"--persons to be manipulated for our purposes--Satan gets a "foothold" into the Christian community. The enemy of our soul laughs at unresolved conflict, which divides the fellowship of the faithful.

Our words are to be channels of God's grace to others (Ephesians 4:30). Dialogue, for Paul, is a sacrament. And God's forgiveness frees us to take the initiative in forgiving those who hurt us. When we do not live together by these guidelines as a Christian community, the Spirit of God is grieved (Ephesians 4:30a). In reviewing Ephesians 4:25-32, we as leaders see more clearly the means by which to "maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace," and, in so doing, walk (lead) worthy of our calling as leaders.

Again, because of these fundamental Christian attitudes, we can *be honest*...with the believers; *immediate*...in dealing with conflict among us; *up-building*...in our words, frequently expressing thoughts that communicate:

I love you,  
I accept you,  
I respect you,



I need you,  
I trust you,  
I serve you; and

I *forgive* you...so that words and deeds done by others to us will not create bitterness within us.

Can Christian leaders really "lead" out of the leadership lifestyle paradigm outlined above? I believe so, even in conflict situations where we find confrontation a necessary approach.

Because relationships are so important to us, we "care enough to confront" our brother or sister in Christ when words or deeds are perceived by us to be detrimental to their growth or to the growth of the fellowship.

We care too much about the relationship to ignore destructive behavior. We care enough to confront.

The fundamental question, always before the Christian leader is, "How can we live together as Christians so that our relationships are redemptive and a witness to unbelievers of the reconciling work of God in Christ?"

These principles and concepts are not psychological in nature; they are deeply theological. The Spirit of God is deeply concerned with the speech of His people (Ephesians 4:30a).

These convictional principles and concepts may not be found in the latest secular textbook on leadership; but they are foundational for the leaders who want their people to catch from them a servant spirit, passionately committed to motivating, equipping and enabling them to serve others in Jesus' name.

Our assignment, then, as church leaders is greater and more demanding than communicating facts, dates, persons, places and events. Our responsibility includes a passionate servant Christian lifestyle that motivates, equips, and enables those whom we lead to *serve others in Jesus' name*.

If this is our vision of ministry, and our leadership lifestyle is characterized by Ephesians 4:25-32, then those whom we serve and for whom we are responsible will increasingly adopt it as their vision of ministry. They will not see in us a finished product. Rather, they will discover in us an on-going process of transformation into Christ-likeness.

It is not easy. I must continually ask "What does it mean to be a servant to my students and staff where I must function as a university president?" What does it mean to be a servant in the midst of *all* the expectations, roles, and functions?

And what about the risks? Misunderstandings? Abuses? Betrayals? Pain?  
Hurts? Is it worth it? Is it really worth the risk of being a servant leader?

I am growing in my understanding of the profoundness of these questions and their answers. Slowly, but with inner confidence, I am developing a deep conviction - theologically grounded - that I

must accept the risks and serve my people with integrity if I am to be a Christian leader. And you, too, will be challenged to find such responses in the situations you face.

Lead with a *vision to serve* and with a commitment to equip servant leaders! If you are captured by this vision of ministry formation and are characterized by a servant leadership lifestyle, then your group - regardless of its size - will be life-giving, growth-producing, and *distinctly Christian*.

Renate Becker Lohmer gave me a poem several years ago when I served on the faculty of European Nazarene College. The poem by Leonard Nimoy reads:

*What mark will I leave behind?  
How will anyone ever know that I have been here?  
What sign will tell the future traveler that I've existed?  
Shall I carve it on the door?  
"I am here!"  
Today...I exist."  
I believe the deepest impression is made  
in those moments when I can say,  
"I care, I love."*

What mark will you leave behind when you depart your present leadership assignment? How will anyone ever know that you have been there? What sign will tell the future traveler that you have existed? I believe the deepest impressions will be made in those moments when you say I love you, I care for you, and I am your brother or sister. I will serve you in Jesus' name regardless of the costs, ignoring the risks, and acknowledging the conflicting roles, functions, expectations, and misunderstandings.

Find a way to serve your people. Keep Figure 1.1 in mind. The cycle of passionate ministry shown in Figure 1.1 will empower the people you lead to reach out and serve others in Jesus' name! *This* is servant leadership! To *this* ministry we are called. Measure your success in ministry by *this* standard! Whatever else our assignment involves, our responsibility demands from us a servant lifestyle of Christian living, which motivates, equips, and enables those whom we lead to serve others in Jesus' name. Our responsibility in ministry is to internalize the passion of grace, then make it part of how we lead (our leadership lifestyle) so it passes to those we lead, and they make it part of their leadership lifestyle. Watching the cycle of Christian leadership unfold and come to fruition in the Christ-like passion others develop is the reward of ministry. Our goal is to "pass it on", to reflect Christ's passion for others so they "pass it on".

## **Defining Christian Leadership**

Christian theological literature abounds with definitions of Christian leadership. Below, I have collected some I think may help you develop your lifestyle of Christian leadership. Take a moment to read the various definitions, then try of the following definitions of Christian leadership,

- a. Which is most meaningful to you? Why?
- b. What are some recurring themes in the definitions?
- c. How would you combine some of the ideas into a definition that appealed to you?

- d. Share some of your findings and your definition in a group discussion.

**Christian leadership is humble service to others, in a community of faith whose head is Christ,...for the purpose of enabling them, through visioning, collaboration, and example, to live their lives under the Lordship of Christ, and to understand, accept, and fulfill their ministry to each other in their vocational calling and their mission to the world.**  
*E. LeBron Fairbanks*

*“Leadership is known by the personalities it enriches, not by those it dominates or captivates. Leadership is not a process of exploitation of others for extraneous ends. It is a process of helping others to discover themselves in the achieving of aims which have become intrusive to them. The proof of leading is in the qualitative growth of the led as individuals and as group members.”*  
 - Dr. Harold Reed, *Dynamics of Leadership*.

**CHRISTIAN OR CHRIST-LIKE LEADERSHIP** is a optimal unity of dynamically interactive divine (indwelling Holy Spirit) and Human (personhood) nature of a Christian who is formed in a community of believers and yields Christ’s knowledge, behavior, and character to influence, produce, and reproduce leaders/followers for God’s mission in the world.” - *Christ-like Leadership*

Christian leadership is knowing what God wants done next, knowing why He wants it done, and knowing how to bring to bear the resources He would bring to bear on the need at hand.” – Bobb Biehl,  
*Mentoring*

The ability to establish and manage a creative climate where people are self-motivated for “the successful achievement of long-term constructive goals compatible with their personal values.”

Leadership occurs anytime one attempts to influence the behavior of an individual or group, regardless of the reason. – Hersey and Blanchard, 1992, p.5.

Leadership is Influence – John Maxwell

The first responsibility of leadership is to define reality. – Max De Pree

“Leaders are dealers in hope.” - Bonaparte

“A process of envisioning, influencing, shaping and enhancing the relationship between leaders and followers that together they may achieve God’s goals for change within the community.”

- P. LaHone, Fuller Theological Seminary

“We suspect that the best kept secret of successful leaders is love: being in love with leading, with the people who do the work, with what their organizations produce and with those who honor the organization by using its work. Leadership is an affair of the heart, not of the head.

- James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 1995.

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.

- Abraham Lincoln

### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN SCRIPTURE**

“If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.” - I Kings 12:7

Romans 12:1-3, 9-13

I Corinthians 2

I Corinthians 12-13

II Corinthians 4:1-12

II Corinthians 5:15-25

II Corinthians 8-10

Galatians 3:26-28

Galatians 5:16-26

Ephesians 5:15-21

Philippians 2:5-11

I Thessalonians 1, 2

Add additional scriptural passages that you find helpful in understanding your role of leadership in the faith community.

## **The Big Question**

**How can my ministry of Christian leadership enable others to fulfill their ministry to each other and mission in the world?**

## **The Leaders Credo**

From *Leadership 2000: Addresses on the Theme of Leadership* by the late Olivet Nazarene University President, Dr. Harold Reed.

➤ I believe in VISION -

“Only He who can see the invisible can do the impossible.”

➤ I believe in INTEGRITY -

“Integrity is the cornerstone of a free society.”

➤ I believe in ENTHUSIASM -

“Enthusiasm is a catalyst that produces miracles.”

➤ I believe in TIMING -

“Timing is the art of knowing when to say WHEN.”

➤ I believe in PEOPLE -

“Mutual respect – caring – genuine appreciation.”

➤ I believe in SUCCESS -

“Dreams with a deadline + dedication + determination = success”

## **Conclusion**

In Theme One, we connected the Passion or Vision of Servant Leadership to the theology of ministry. The theology of Christian leadership begins with a prayer for being Christ-like, reflecting his passion for others. In a manner similar to my sabbatical journey, we must return to our relationship with Christ, as the basis from which would come our relationship to others. How could I be more Christ-like? Step one in effective Christian leadership is to internalize Christ's passion and vision. That is the necessary starting point to be effective Christian leaders. Then we can move to the next steps of turning outward with our leadership.

In Theme Two, POWER, we will explore further how the relentless pursuit of "Christ-likeness" carries us to the POWER of servant leadership. We will begin to look at two aspects of POWER: our relationship to God, and our relationship with those we lead. We will explore how once we internalize Christ's passion, we begin to understand that His passion is the source of our Power as leaders. Fortunate for us, the POWER of God in Jesus Christ is available to us at all times. And like passion, the focus of God's power is service or ministry. Then, we will explore our relationship with those we lead.



## *Theme Two*

**THE LIFESTYLE  
OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS  
CHARACTERIZED BY A PASSION  
FOR CHRISTLIKENESS.**



## Theme Two

### THEME TWO: THE LIFESTYLE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS CHARACTERIZED BY A PASSION FOR CHRISTLIKENESS.

*“Spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”- Dr. Robert Mulholland*

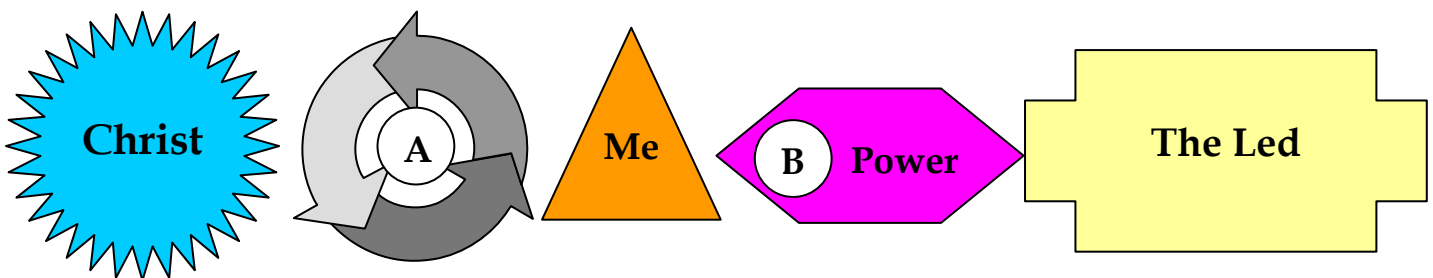
#### OVERVIEW OF THEME STRUCTURE

Introduction: “In the Name of Jesus”

- A Christ-like Leadership Lifestyle
- A Biblical Model for Leading in a Faith Community (based on Ephesians 4)
  1. Probing Questions
  2. Qualities of a Christ-like Leader
- Conclusion

Using Figure 2.1 below, although the **Power** involved in leading the people of God may appear to mostly reside in area **B** below, in fact the **Power** comes from Christ as shown in **A**, and this power from Christ is something we as leaders are continually receiving, reflecting, and pursuing, hence the circular diagram. Your leadership style (**B**) is a reflection of how you respond to the power Christ offers you. Most of this theme will explore area **B**, however, it is essential to take a

Figure 2.1



moment to explore **A** at the outset.

In Exodus, God instructs Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. When Moses hesitates and asks God to send someone else, God underscores the concept of **A** in Figure 2.1. Not only did God reassure Moses saying He would be with Moses, furthermore, He told Moses, “It is I – the great ‘I am’ - who calls, empowers, keeps and carries you.” First and foremost, God reassured Moses of **A**, and He reassured Moses that armed with **A**, Moses will have God’s power and support to conduct **B**. At the outset of this theme, using Henri Nouwen’s work, we will look at **A**, then move on to **B**. Henri Nouwen’s work underscores the iterative aspect of **A** showing that we play a role in activating the power God offers us. As leaders dealing with **A** and **B** becomes a balancing act.

In discussing Christian Leadership, Henri Nouwen clearly recognizes that both **A** and **B** in Figure 2.1 are to be considered when looking at the power or authority component of Christian

leadership. In the discussion below of Nouwen's book and the Bible study of Philippians 2, we will focus primarily on **A** in Figure 2.1. After the Bible study, we will use the remainder of Theme Two (Sections B and C) to look at the **B** portion of Christian Leadership.

### **Introduction: In memoriam to Henri R. M. Nouwen and his book, *In the Name of Jesus - Reflections on Christian Leadership***

Printed in 1989, the material in the book, *In the Name of Jesus*, was first presented to a group of Roman Catholic leaders in Washington, D.C., on the subject of Christian leadership in the twenty-first century. Nouwen had several years earlier moved to Daybreak, one of the L'Arche communities worldwide for mentally handicapped people. The move to Daybreak in Toronto, Canada, followed a brilliant teaching career by Nouwen at Harvard, Yale and Notre Dame.

The brief, yet powerful, book of eighty-one pages focuses on a vision of Christian leadership nurtured in a life of prayer, confession, and forgiveness in community. Nouwen deftly addresses three contemporary temptations of Christian leaders - to be relevant, to be spectacular, and to be powerful, and is guided in his vision by two stories from the Gospels: the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11) and the story of Peter's call to be a shepherd (John 21:15-19).

Christian leadership, according to Nouwen, involves self-denial and leads from vulnerability, being vulnerable to God's power, or **A** in Figure 2.1. As is often the case with Nouwen, he identifies three "movements" in the book:

- From Relevance to Prayer
- From Popularity to Ministry
- From Leading to being Led

He reminds us that Jesus' first temptation was to be relevant: to turn stones to bread. To this temptation, Nouwen's words are clear:

*"The leader of the future will be the one who dares to claim his irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows him or her to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all the glitter of success and to bring the light of Jesus there." (p. 22)*

The "irrelevance" is rooted in "the permanent, intimate relationship with the incarnate Word, Jesus, and ... find there the source for their words, advice, and guidance." Clearly, this relevance is the subject of **A** in Figure 2.1

Remember the second temptation of Jesus? It was a temptation to do something spectacular, something that would bring the applause of people, something that would highlight **B** in Figure 2.1. "Throw yourself from the parapet of the temple and let the angels catch you and carry you in their arms," the enemy told Jesus. The discipline needed to counter this temptation to be popular and do something spectacular is the discipline of confession and forgiveness. Nouwen reminds us that in our strength we cannot heal, reconcile, or give life to others. We are "wounded" people who need as much care as anyone we care for. "The mystery of ministry," Nouwen proclaims, "is that we have been chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited and unconditional love of God." (p. 44)

The discipline required to overcome the temptation of “individual heroism” (or look to **A** instead of **B**) is confession and forgiveness – individuals willing to confess their brokenness and to ask forgiveness from those to whom they minister. Making humble connections (confession and forgiveness) to those we lead helps the Christian leader overcome the temptation of “individual heroism”. Christian leaders “are called to live the Incarnation, that is, to live in their own bodies but also in the corporate body of the community, and to discover there the presence of the Holy Spirit.” (p. 48) In the faith communities, we are “accountable to them, and need their affection and support, and are called to minister with their whole being, including their wounded selves.” (p. 50)

The third temptation of Jesus was the temptation of power. “I will give you all the Kingdoms of this world in their splendor,” Jesus was told by Satan. Again a **B** focus in Figure 2.1. Is this an irresistible temptation? Nouwen reminds us that power provides for us a substitute for “the hard task of love, control over the cross, being a leader over being led.” (p. 60) Power, control and being a leader are often substituted, Nouwen believes, for healthy, intimate relationships with the faith community.

John 21:18, especially the words, “Somebody else will take you where you would rather not go,” is a pivotal passage for Christian leaders, according to Nouwen, who desired to let go of power (**B** in Figure 2.1) and follow the humble way of Jesus (**A** in Figure 2.1). The ability and willingness to be led where you would rather not go is crucial.

Nouwen challenges Christian leaders to think theologically about the practice of leadership – thinking and leading with the mind of Christ. Christian leaders think, speak, and act in the name of Jesus. Christian leaders of the future...

*“have to be theologians, persons who know the heart of God and are trained – through prayer, study, and careful analysis – to manifest the divine event of God’s saving work in the midst of the many seemingly random events of their time.” (p. 68)*

In referring to leading with the mind of Christ, Nouwen is presenting a theological leadership – a deep spiritual formation involving the whole person – body, mind, and spirit.

Nouwen, in this powerful book, asks us “to move from a concern for relevance to a life of prayer, from worries about popularity to communal and mutual ministry, and from a leadership built on power to a leadership in which we critically discern where God is leading us and our people.” (p. 72). This requires us to be **A**-focused. Are we willing to be led “where we do not want to go? (John 21:18)

Nouwen also helps introduce the place of **B** in Figure 2.1. To be effective leaders, we must develop the skills appropriate in our relationships with the led. Nouwen provides a good introduction by asking three questions about spiritual leadership:

- Can we count on competence?
- Dare we go solo?
- Must we be in control?

He responds with these answers:

- Unconditional love.
- Vulnerable love.
- Trusting love.

Nouwen concludes, "...the oldest, most traditional vision of Christian leadership is still a vision that awaits realization in the future." Is leadership based on competency or character? No debate. Character must always be the overriding focus for the servant leader. So Character, which we will explore in detail in Theme Four, outweighs competence in accomplishing or excelling at the **B** portion of leadership.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." – Philippians 2:5-11

When reviewing the incarnational character of the servant leader, especially in light of Philippians 2:5-11, we must look at our Spirit, Strategy, Style, and Stewardship as it relates to that of Christ Jesus. We must consider our incarnate likeness in regards to His likeness, among His people, from His fullness and for His glory. Again, the character we need for effective Christian leadership, to excel at **B**, comes from **A**, God.

### **A Christ-like Leadership Lifestyle**

OUTLINE: *(Use this outline to assist you in processing the information that follows.)*

1. Key Concept:       Communication is the greatest single factor affecting one's personal health and his relationship to others.
2. Key Question:       How can we so live together as Christians that our relationships are redemptive and a witness to others of the reconciling work of God in Christ?
3. Key Challenge:       "Walking Worthy of our Calling"       Ephesians 4:1
4. Key Insight:        "Living the Reconciled Life"       Ephesians 4:2-3
5. Key Principle:       "Speaking the Truth in Love"       Ephesians 4:15-16
6. Key Application:    "Be honest, forthright, up-building, kind and compassionate"       Ephesians 4:25-32

#### **We "speak the truth in love" because:**

A. "We are members of one body." (Ephesians 4:25)

- 1.) Prohibition: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) Command: \_\_\_\_\_

- B. "Satan gets a foothold in our lives" when we do not speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- 1.) Prohibition: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) Command: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Because of the power of words to bless or to curse. (Ephesians 4:29)
- 1.) Prohibition: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) Command: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Because we have been forgiven in Christ. (Ephesians 4:32)
- 1.) Prohibition: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) Command: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

1. The Spirit of God is deeply concerned with the speech of His people. (Ephesians 4:30a)
2. The key to maintaining the "unity of the Spirit" in the midst of multifaceted diversity within a Christian community is to speak the truth in love.

## **A Biblical Model for Leading in a Faith Community**

### **(based on Ephesians 4)**

1. **Key Concept**: "Communication is the greatest single factor affecting one's personal health and his/her relationship to others." - Virginia Satir
2. **Key Question**: How can we live together, so that our relationships are redemptive and a witness to unbelievers of the reconciling work of Christ?

Now, this is a leadership question! "How does my Christian leadership enable others to fulfill their ministry to each other and their mission in the world...in the context of a dynamic laboratory of learning how to live together as God's children?"

In the midst of conflicting expectations, multiple constituents, differing denominational backgrounds, various levels of maturity, multi-cultural perspectives... how can we live together Christianly? How does a holiness doctrine influence a holiness lifestyle? How does our holiness testimony translate to a Christian leadership lifestyle? Going back to Figure 2.1, how does **A** translate into an effective and correct **B**? As missionaries in cross-cultural situations, or pastors in local churches, these questions become critical for us.

Often we are thrown together, in the context of our ministerial assignment, in a close Christian community. You quickly become aware of others' strengths and weaknesses. Your own personality differences soon become obvious. Thus, our specific leadership setting (as missionary, pastor, or administrator) becomes a dynamic laboratory for learning how to live together as God's family.

We must ask ourselves, how do we respond to conflict under pressure?

Do we respond Christianly, or in a way that is no different from the person who makes no profession of faith?

Why are these issues so important?

3. Key Challenge: Walking “worthy” of our calling (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Ephesians 4:1-3 is indicative and gives statements of fact. It is doctrinal and explains who we are in Christ. Ephesians 4-6 is imperative and gives statements of action. These chapters are ethically focused and explain how we should live as Christians.

Ephesians 4:1 is the transition verse that invites us to walk worthy of our calling and to participate with God in the reconciliation of the world back to God.

4. Key Insight: Living (and) leading the reconciled and transformed life (Ephesians 4:2-3)

If living and leading a reconciled and transformed life is our calling, then how does this happen? Ephesians 4:2-3 tells us, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient...be supportive of one another in love.... Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Paul demonstrated reconciliation with God by living redemptively within the fellowship. Then you will have credibility to tell unbelievers, “You need to be reconciled to God.” If God is more interested in our character than our comfort, then what are the character qualities God wants us to demonstrate within the Christian community?

II Peter 1:5-9 says, “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”

If we possess these qualities, we will be productive and effective in our Christian walk. How do we develop these character qualities and walk “worthy” – in humility, gentleness, patience, supportiveness, and unity?

5. Key Principle: “SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE...” (Ephesians 4:15-16)

Speaking the truth in love is a powerful biblical concept for leaders of Christian communities. It is an enabling principle to embrace and lead the People of God. However, the skill of “making contact” is not automatically received when we are filled with God’s Spirit in the experience of entire sanctification?

The following poem by Virginia Satir expresses the essence of what it means to speak the truth in love.

**GOALS FOR ME**

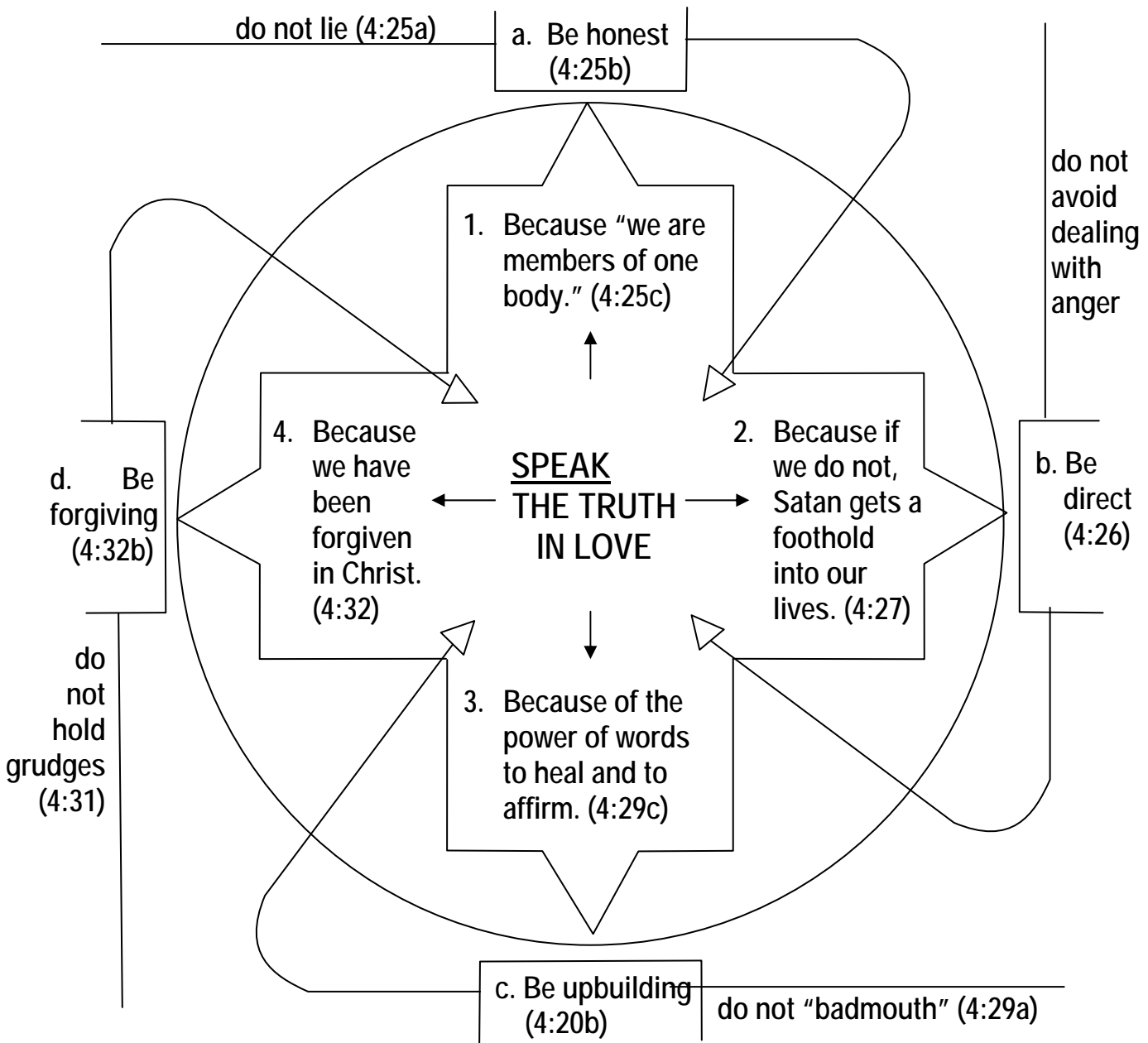
**I want to love you without clutching,  
appreciate you without judging,  
join you without invading,  
invite you without demanding,  
leave you without guilt,  
criticize you without blaming,  
and help you without insulting.  
If I can have the same from you,  
then we can truly meet and  
enrich each other.**

6. Key application: The Principle Applied (Ephesians 4:25-32)

## Figure 2

# A COMMUNICATION MODEL FOR LEADING THE PEOPLE OF GOD\*

(BASED ON EPHESIANS 4)

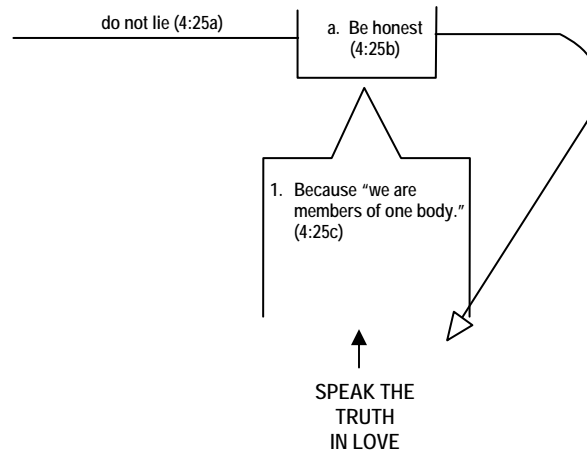


\*This model is best explicated by use of a PowerPoint or overhead where each of the four components of the model is highlighted individually.



We “**SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE**” because:

1. **WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE BODY** (Ephesians 4:25)



The Bible compares the spiritual body—the body of Christ—to the physical body (I Corinthians 12: 12-27; Romans 12: 3-8; I Peter 3: 8-9, 13-17; Ephesians 4: 1-6). What a difference it makes when we affirm within each issue of disagreement, or conflict situation, that the person “across the table” from us, on the basis of his/her testimony of faith, is a brother or sister in Christ, and a member, with me, of the body of Christ.

I had a dream one night while visiting friends in a nearby state. For some reason I was in an inner city, somewhere in the United States. I was traveling with an African American, and the two of us had just witnessed a violent argument in a store. One man from the inner city was selling merchandise to the other gentleman who was not from the inner city.

I cannot remember the cause of the argument, but I remember the person from the inner city saying to the other, who was not,

**"You will never understand; you are not from here."**

I remember listening very intently at both sides of the argument and believing parts of what each was saying. The two people arguing finally separated. I remember being so moved by what I had just experienced that, for some reason, I had the courage to speak to the man from the inner city that did not leave the scene. I said to him, "I really do not know who is right and who is wrong. I don't know what should be done in this situation." And then I continued, "What bothers me more is that what I have just experienced is a small picture of our society at large. We speak, and argue vehemently from our perspective, always assuming that we are right." But **what jolted me out of my dream was a statement I made to him with intense passion, "It seems like you were just talking past one another."**

At that moment I awakened from my dream. Literally, my heart was pounding. I began to think about the dream and its implications. I couldn't get away from the words, "I really don't know who is right or wrong, but it seems like you were talking right past each other."

I began to ponder the implications of my dream in my own life. "I really don't know who is right or wrong, but it seems like we often just talk right past one another." *How often this scenario is played out in real life* and how painful—even in our own Christian communities.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he has much to say to us about our conversations with others. Because of our faith conviction to speak the truth in love we should "put off falsehood" (Eph. 4:25). We should not lie. Do Christians "lie" to each other? Paul was speaking to Christians.

Personally, this verse applied to me in areas of emotional dishonesty — not being honest with others regarding my negative feelings toward them when barriers between us have been created. John Powell<sup>6</sup> explains the levels of communication on which we speak:

- Lowest level — the level of cliché
- Next level — the level of facts
- A higher level — the level of ideas
- An even higher level — the level of feelings

In 4:25, Paul encourages us to be honest. With awareness that we are accepted comes the freedom to be honest. New Testament injunctions to "speak the truth one to another" imply far more than an absence of lies. It implies the kind of honesty that allows others to know us as we are, secure in our acceptance by God and by them, and based on the affirming experience of love.

Even when under attack, the apostle Paul opened his heart to others, to share with them his inner feelings and experiences (i.e., II Corinthians 1:3-9, 2:1-4). He could claim without hesitation that those who met him came to understand his motives fully (I Thessalonians 2). This trait of honesty in our relationships with others and with ourselves has a counter-model in the Pharisees. These men were labeled hypocrites because they were always play-acting. It is probable that their lifestyles finally meant that they were deceiving themselves as well as attempting to deceive others. How striking it is that the Pharisees are the one group of people who Jesus was unable to touch. They had lost contact with reality, lived in their own world of pretense, and were cut off from all that could have saved them.

John deals with the issue of honesty in his first epistle. In insisting that we "walk in the light," he first points us to the necessity of being honest with ourselves (and others) about our sins and failings (I John 1:1-9). Freedom to know God's progressive cleansing comes only with honesty about our sins and confession of them. The necessity in the fellowship of believers for relational context (where believers can be real with one another, and thus actually know and then take on one another's burdens, where forgiveness can be asked as its need is confessed, and where it can be freely given) is imperative.

Why is this so important? Paul refers to us as members of one body (v. 25). Read the following passages that also describe our relationship to one another.

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<sup>6</sup> Powell, John. *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* Thomas More Publishing, reprint edition, 1995.

**I Corinthians 12:12-27**

<sup>12</sup>The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup>Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup>If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

<sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup>while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup>If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. <sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

**I Peter 3:8-9, 13-17**

<sup>8</sup>Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. <sup>9</sup>Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

<sup>13</sup>Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." <sup>15</sup>But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup>keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. <sup>17</sup>It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

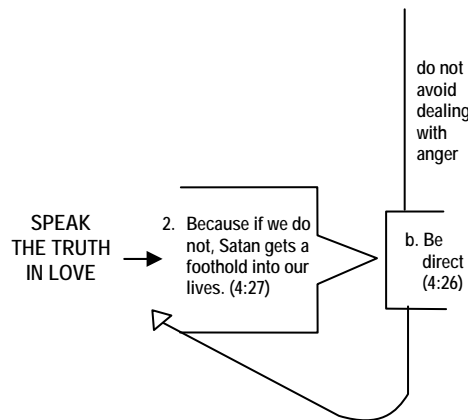
**Romans 12:3-8**

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. <sup>4</sup>Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup>We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup>If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup>if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

**Ephesians 4:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup>Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup>Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

## 2. WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE BECAUSE WHEN WE DO NOT, SATAN GETS A FOOthOLD IN OUR LIVES (Ephesians. 4:26-27)



Therefore, do not delay (“Do not let the sun go down on your anger.”) You should respond Christianly (“In your anger do not sin.”). It is important to consider the issue of conflict within the Christian community.

### **In conflict management, the key issue is understanding, not agreement.**

The goal is not conflict resolution, but conflict management in a Christianly manner. There is great concern regarding conflict in the congregational life/relationships in the local church or even a Christian university. Too often we use avoidance tactics in conflict situations.

What is meant by avoidance tactics in conflict management is denying the issue by not talking about the situation or (always beating around the bush) instead of dealing with the given circumstances. This approach or avoidance tactic continually puts off the “real” issue until the next “tomorrow” or the next meeting, believing that it will eventually go away. We make the un-scriptural assumption that ‘peace-loving’ Christians should get along and not really have serious conflicts. We all know this isn’t true but still avoid the issue. We deny our real feelings; harbor resentment and allow the bitterness to intensify. **We lack the knowledge of how to deal creatively in conflict situations.** We’re afraid to really share our honest feelings for fear of rejection, disapproval, frustration or hurt. We want to protect our ‘image’ of being nice, kind, understanding and loving.

Conflict is what develops between individuals when they differ. David Augsburger, in his book *Caring Enough to Confront*<sup>7</sup> says, “When your thrust as a person runs counter to mine, to deny my own thrust is to be untrue to the push and the pull of God within me. For me to ignore and do violence to your thrust as a person is to violate your becoming a Son of God.”

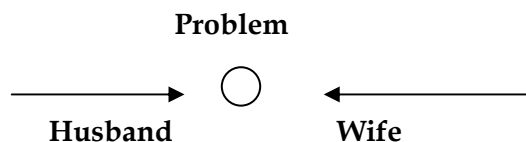
Augsburger says, “Conflict is natural, normal and neutral. Conflict is neither good nor bad, right nor wrong. Conflict simply is. And how we view, approach and work through

<sup>7</sup> Augsburger, David W. *Caring Enough to Confront*. Regal Books, 1981.

our differences does to a large extent determine our whole life pattern." The question is not – will conflict arise? The question is – how do we deal with it?

Virginia Satir<sup>8</sup> explains how we normally deal with conflictual situations. Ninety-six percent of troubled families deal with conflict in one of four inappropriate ways:

- 1) Placate (give in)  
He says, "I told you not to go out with the others." She says, "You're right, darling, I'm wrong."
- 2) Blame  
"Those ladies took you away from the phone today so you were not here when I called."
- 3) Withdraw  
He says, "What do you ladies do when you get together in the afternoon?"  
She leaves without saying anything.  
Hide behind someone else. Use third party to do your work – child, friend, etc.



- 4) Distract  
She says, "We need to work on our finances, they are out of balance." He says, "You were out with those silly women again, weren't you."

**The result of using the four inappropriate ways is that the problem remains, tension mounts, and the relationship is edgy.**

There is a fifth option – "I care enough to confront" (Augsburger), "leveling with love" (Satir), or "Speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). He says, "You are spending too much time with those stupid women." She says, "I'm angry with you because of your attacks on me and my friends. I must talk this over with you now because I'm building up resentment and hostility toward you."

Care-fronting or "leveling" as referred to by Augsburger is the biblical principal of "speaking the truth in love." This option brings healing, enables growth and produces change, but only 4% of us deal with conflict in this manner. There are two arms of a genuine relationship - confrontation with truth and affirmation of love.

So how can I begin to manage conflict in a "caring and confronting" way? First, we must eliminate a win/lose mentality (I'm right, you're wrong). There are three methods of the win/lose mentality (I win; you lose (authoritarian); you win; I lose (permissiveness); No win (negativism).

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<sup>8</sup> Satir, Virginia. *Peoplemaking*.

Reaching out is two-sided based on others needs and our own needs. With left hand reaching out - I do care; I want to respect you; I want your respect; and with right hand reaching out - I want you to know how I feel; I want to tell you where I am; I have this goal for our relationship. This "caring and confronting" approach ends the blaming game, gets to healing questions - in simple, clear, direct language.

**You must ask yourself, "Where do we start?, What is the loving, responsible, truly respectful thing to do?, Where do we go from here?"**

Trying to truly hear what another says - how it is said, what feelings are conveyed - is the art of "active listening." This practice involves hearing with an inner ear to the feelings, hurts, angers, and the demands of the other person.

Use "I" messages instead of "You" messages. "I" messages reflect my feelings without placing blame. "You" messages are most often attacks, criticisms, faultfinding of the other person, labels, and ways of fixing blame. There is a tremendous difference between an honest confessional ("I" message) and distorted rejection ("You" message).

**"I" message**

I am angry.

I feel rejected.

I don't like the wall between us.

I don't like being blamed or bearing blame.

I want freedom to say yes or no.

I want a respectful friendship with you again.

**"You" message**

You make me angry.

You're judging and rejecting me.

You're building a wall between us.

You're blaming everything on me.

You're trying to run my life.

You've got to respect me or you're not my friend.

Eliminate "why" questions. "Why" questions are an effective way of manipulating others (similar to "You" messages). (i.e. "Why do you always leave your things lying all over the house?, Why don't you pick up after yourselves?, Why don't you show a little interest in things?, Why can't I get a little cooperation?") We use "why" questions to give hidden messages of anger that we are unwilling to own honestly. "Why" questions are like a "hit and run." We must give clear "yes" or "no" signals. "Yes" signals come easy; however, "No" signals come very hard - especially face-to-face. Nice guys are supposed to say yes, but it's self-defeating. Often we hesitate to clearly state our feelings for fear of rejection/disapproval of others. Jesus said, "Let your 'yes' be a clear 'yes' and your 'no', 'no.'"

Our problem is that we tend to respond to wrongs to us in an equally wrong way.

We should initiate discussion if we have a complaint. Accept anger as a normal, natural human emotion. Clear statements of anger are something different than feelings and angry demands. Clear statements are a positive emotion, a self-affirming emotion which responds to the heart of rejection and devastation. There are two types of anger to consider - personal anger and virtuous anger, which is anger focused on deed not person. Virtuous anger can slice through emotional barriers or communication barriers and establish contacts.

**“Speaking the truth in love” or “truthing it in love” is the Christ-like response to conflict.**

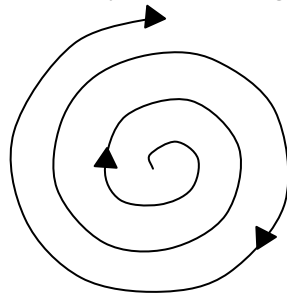
It describes a lifestyle for Christians who care enough to confront where conflicts arise. Read again Ephesians 4:15-32. When differences between people are dealt with openly, conflict can be a positive experience because it can lead to personal growth. But when differences are concealed and individuals are prevented from expressing themselves, personal growth will not occur.

Personal conflict is a part of growing up and trying out new capabilities. Learn the value of expressing differences openly and listening to the other persons' response in the hope of reaching some sort of understanding.

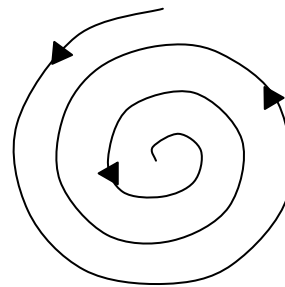
**IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT,  
THE KEY ISSUE IS UNDERSTANDING, NOT AGREEMENT.**

Key questions to ask in the midst of conflict situations are: What can I learn? and How can I change? These are growth-producing questions. On the contrary, growth inhibiting questions are: Why me? and What if...? This is the could have, should have, would have way of thinking.

These two ways of thinking and reacting can be diagrammed as follows:

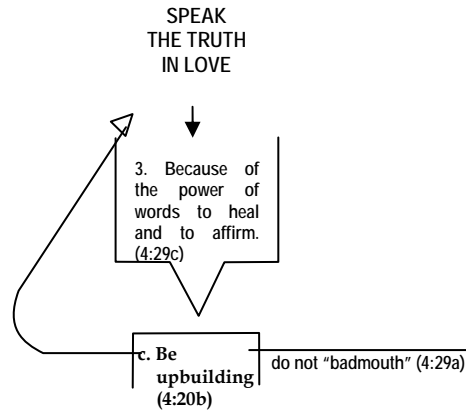


Growth Producing



Growth Inhibiting

### 3. WHY DO WE SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE? BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF WORDS TO HEAL AND AFFIRM. (Ephesians 4:29)



“Speak only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs” (v. 29). Paul encourages members of the Body to use their speech for the help of others, for their up-building as the occasion may offer.

Our speech is to be used for the benefit of those who are linked with us in the body of Christ. Dialogue is a sacrament. We are to converse with each other within the fellowship in such a way that our words become a vehicle and demonstration of the very grace of God. In all conversation, the choice of language and subject matter has to be such that the up building and edification is for the purpose of “ministering grace” to the hearer. For Paul, there is no room for empty chatter or for remarks that serve no other purpose than to degrade another person.

Paul says, “Do not let any corrupt or unwholesome talk come out of your mouth.” Corrupt talk is foul talk. Colossians 4:6 reads, “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” In biblical anthropology, the mouth is representative of the whole body and reveals the whole man. In Matthew 12:34, Jesus said, “Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.”

Saint Paul emphasized that one’s speech reveals the quality of his relationship with Christ. Paul is not talking about a technique, but an attitude toward the other person. I need you – you have gifts and strengths I don’t have to affirm, disciple, correct, up-build (negatively – you need me). I love you – you are my brother/sister in Christ (negatively – you need to love me). I accept you – you are being changed by Christ as I am being changed (negatively – you must accept me). I trust you – you desire to serve the same Christ I serve (negatively – you must trust me). I respect you – you are different, yet we are one in Christ. I serve you – I want to minister grace to you.

It is also a matter of the focus of our words – “...only what is helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” There must be a focus beyond ourselves, beyond self-serving comments. Our focus must be on the up building of



others. Clinical psychologist, Sven Wahlroos, in his book *Family Communication*<sup>9</sup>, states “Make your communication as realistically positive as possible.” As a guideline he says that **the praise to criticism ratio should be kept at about 90-80 percent praise to 10-20 percent criticism.**

Usually the opposite is true in our interactions with others. Sometimes being emotionally honest necessitates criticism of another in an appropriate manner. However, 80-90% praise is needed (i.e., Thank you, I appreciate you, You were helpful, You affirmed me, I am grateful for you). It cannot be superficial. It cannot be “surpy” or it will be resented.

Some very personal and practical questions to consider from Ephesians 4:29 regarding the use of words are:

Do I tend to ‘bad mouth’?

Do I tend to shoot from the hip?

Do I tend to respond quickly before I have all the facts?

Do I tend to talk about people behind their backs, saying things I would not say to them?

Do I tend to stress unimportant issues?

Do I tend to make excuses?

Do I tend to avoid reality questions? (ask questions)

Do I tend to use unfair communication techniques?

Silence, ignoring, sulking, pouting, cold shoulder treatment?

Sarcasm and ridicule?

Unfavorable comparisons?

Exposing dirty linen in public?

Blaming the person for something which he cannot help or cannot do anything about?

Intimidating, yelling, exploding?

Bragging?

Nagging, whining?

**These ‘unfair’ communication techniques present problems with what we say and problems with what we don’t say.**

Consider these questions regarding the use of our words within the community of faith?

Does what I say build up or tear down the other person?

Would I say what I am saying directly to the person involved?

Do you know all the facts or am I responding on the basis of half-truths or partial facts?

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<sup>9</sup> Wahlroos, Sven. *Family Communication*. McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Books, Revised edition, 1995.

Is my response triggered more by emotion than by reason?

Is the issue really deserving of the action and energy that I am giving it?

Can the situation be seen from a different perspective?

Have I tried to accept the feelings of the other person, and understand why the person feels the way he/she does?

THE MAN BESIDE YOU IS DIFFERENT  
ONLY UNTIL YOU GET TO KNOW HIM.

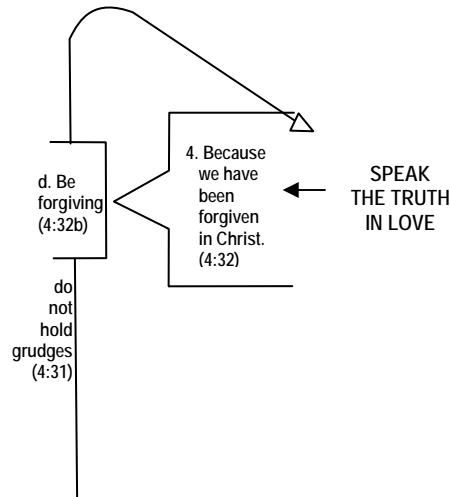
IF IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE,  
DON'T LET IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Ephesians 4:28 tell us to steal no longer. Exodus 20:16 says, "Ye shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." The broader implications prohibit the sin of slander, tale-bearing, gossip, flattery, and "character assassination." To destroy a man's character by a whispering campaign profits nothing. As Shakespeare put it: "Who steals my purse steals trash; ... But he that filches from me my good name; Robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed." - Othello, Act III, Scene 3, Line 183.

We have the power to bless. All who have influence and weight with others have the power to bless and to withhold blessings to cause others to grow or to wither, to help or to hinder, to heal or to hurt. The person who can speak the sincere word of forgiveness and acceptance is a healer of the highest order. Why? Because he removes the deep malady of the inner curse and condemnation.

**Paul is concerned with the role of words exchanged between individuals within the body. In the midst of everyday dialog God's grace and power should flow through words used.**

4. **WHY DO WE “SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE?” BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN IN CHRIST.** (Ephesians 4:31-32)



The command is clear, we are to be forgiving just as Christ forgave us. The verb used in 4:32 implies that through love, the barriers to fellowship between persons are set aside.

An attitude of “realized forgiveness” describes the climate in the faith community. But what if it is not? You must take initiative in forgiving regardless of the response of the other person. Realized forgiveness creates a growing desire to up-build the other in love. A climate in which persons are so close to one another and so confident of acceptance that sharing burdens, forgiving, even taking the other to task is no threat to the relationship. There must be no room for strife, resentment, envy, etc. (v. 31) God’s forgiveness enables the Christian to find his way back to the one from whom he is alienated. You must forgive others for God as Christ has forgiven you.

**Forgive Quickly (4:32c).** Our forgiveness of others can be immediate or delayed.

The words of Jesus on the cross regarding forgiveness are profound. “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” His words did not change the situation. His words did not change the people involved. His words did not reduce the pain He felt. His words did not change things externally. His words of forgiveness, on the cross, changed everything internally. He was not going to let what others said and did to Him create within Himself bitterness, resentment, and anger. He was not going to permit what others said and did to Him to create a break in the relationship with God the Father. It simply was not worth it! He was not going to give others that much control over His life. It was as if He was saying, “Do what you have to do, say what you have to say, but I will not permit these words and deeds done to me and said against me to create a break in the relationship with the Father. It’s just not worth it!”

The issue is not so much the response from others to our efforts to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving. Our efforts may not always be received in the spirit they were

given. But withholding forgiveness permits Satan to gain a foothold in our lives (4:26-27). Bitterness develops; anger increases; resentment manifests itself; and Satan laughs.

Our calling is to be Christ-like even in the uncomfortable situations in which we sometimes find ourselves. God will provide blessing and joy within us, regardless of the apparent rejection sometimes from the other persons involved. Remember...as believers, we forgive, not to change people, but because God, in Christ, forgave us. And we were so undeserving. Sometimes we have been hurt so deeply that we can't reach out with integrity, in forgiveness to others. "Father...forgive them..." The words of Jesus were words of a prayer!

And Paul reminds us that God's grace is sufficient for us in our weakness, and His power is made perfect in our weakness.

I received an email recently from a person who left campus some time ago. From this person's perspective, things were done and not done that continued to bother the individual. Accusations were made at me and other university personnel. The words hurt. After several days, I responded, not trying to answer each point made. Instead, I asked for forgiveness. Obviously, the school and I had not been for the individual what the person needed from us. I had a choice. I could "brew" over the stinging email; or genuinely seek forgiveness, asking God and the person to teach me through this situation.

Ephesians 4:25-32 describes a lifestyle by which believers are to live together as the People of God. What happens when they don't? God is grieved (v.30) "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God."

Does verse 30 refer to verse 29 or 31? The answer is both. The Spirit of God is greatly concerned about the speech of His people. This is a profound theological issue. Anything that tends to destroy fellowship grieves the Spirit who seeks to build it up. The sin of offending a brother by a false word or act especially grieves God. The Spirit either rejoices or grieves with the words expressed in the fellowship.

Is this communication lifestyle possible simply by human efforts alone? Obviously not. In Chapter 5 verse 18, Paul challenges the People of God with an imperative, "Be filled with God's Spirit...continually, daily..." It is in terms of agape love that the Spirit energizes the believer living under the sovereignty of the Spirit. Living under the sovereignty of the Spirit, the faith community is gradually transformed into the image of Christ. **Again, the key question -**

How can we live together as Christians so that our relationships will be redemptive and a witness to unbelievers of the reconciling word of God in Christ?

Ephesians 4 speaks directly to this issue. Read again Ephesians 4:1-3, 11, 15-16, 25 and 5:1-2, 18-21. We are to be "imitators of God...and live a life of love" (5:1-2) in leading and living together as the People of God. We are to model a holiness lifestyle (5:1-2). When we do not live like this we grieve the Holy Spirit. **Relationships within a faith community are an**

**intensely theological issue.** The lifestyle can only be maintained, developed, and strengthened as we are continuously being filled with the Spirit (5:18).

Consider these questions:

Who were the most Christ-like leaders you have ever known?

What was the spiritual quality that most stands out in your mind?

### **MAKING CONTACT**

I believe the greatest gift  
I can conceive of having  
from anyone is  
to be seen by them,  
heard by them,  
to be understood and  
touched by them.  
The greatest gift  
I can give is  
to see, hear, understand,  
and to touch  
another person.  
When this is done  
I feel contact has been made.  
-Virginia Satir

## 1. Probing Questions

In what area discussed do you have the most problems with your faith community? Why?

With whom among the People of God are you having the most problems? Why?

What one thing, specifically, can you do now to begin to heal the broken or ruptured relationship?

Complete these sentences:

I need to stop...

I need to begin...

I need the help of the Holy Spirit with...

## 2. Qualities of a Christ-like Leader

**Authentic** – dependable, real, faithful

reliable, trustworthy, trusted, credible, believable, veracious, genuine

**Grateful** – attentive, inclusive, and God-centered

thankful, appreciative, agreeable, refreshing, restful

**Humility** – Godliness, obedient, modest, broken, gentle

meekness of heart, mind, or spirit,

humbleness, reverence, contentment, peacefulness

**Integrity** – trustworthy, honest, just, fair, conscientious

truthfulness, justness, courage

**Magnanimous Spirit** – giving, generous, gracious, courteous

forgiving, merciful, big-hearted, fair, kind, philanthropic, self-sacrificing,

noble, majestic

**Sensitive** – intuitive, perceptive, insightful

responsive, compassionate, understanding, tender-hearted, warm, gentle,

discriminating

## **Conclusion**

**We have now explored the relationship between PASSION and POWER, and servant leadership. We understand the source of the PASSION is the theology of ministry, and Christ-likeness is the common thread connecting both PASSION and POWER. We understand the relationship of A and B in Figure 2.1 presented at the beginning of this Theme Two. In Theme Three, PURPOSE, we will turn our attention to the body of Christ, the people of God, those at the far right-hand side of Figure 2.1.**

# *Theme Three*

**THE PURPOSE  
OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS  
BIASED TOWARD EFFECTIVELY  
PREPARING THE BODY OF CHRIST  
- THE PEOPLE OF GOD -  
FOR MINISTRY AND MISSION.**



## *Theme Three*

### **THEME FOUR: THE PURPOSE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS BIASED TOWARD EFFECTIVELY PREPARING THE BODY OF CHRIST - THE PEOPLE OF GOD - FOR MINISTRY AND MISSION.**

*"The Christian ministry is a shared ministry with every believer serving and supporting one another, using Holy Spirit-given gifts to stimulate personal and corporate growth and reconciliation in both the church and the world." E. LeBron Fairbanks*

#### **OVERVIEW OF THEME STRUCTURE**

Introduction: Leadership for Congregational Transformation

- GRACE ...AND LEADING THE PEOPLE OF GOD
- Personal Transformation: God's Vision for Us
- Congregational or Corporate Transformation: "The Leader as Catalyst"
- Further Thoughts on Christian Leadership for Congregational Transformation
- A New Leadership Paradigm: A Grace-full Leader
- The Sigmoid Curve
- Christian Hope in Troubled Times

#### **Introduction: Leadership for Congregational Transformation**

How do we shape servant, Christ-like leaders in the congregation? What is the primary teaching method by which this vision or calling will be realized in the lives of the People of God? How do we teach and preach to help others realize their calling for Christ?

More than two decades ago, just after its publication, I read the book *Servant Leadership*, by Robert Greenleaf, former Director of Management Research for AT&T. I had recently started my first administrative teaching assignment in Christian higher education. This book had a tremendous impact on me.

The second chapter of *Servant Leadership*<sup>10</sup> focuses on "The Institution as Servant." Greenleaf states: "... caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built. Whereas, until recently, caring was largely person-to-person, now most of it is mediated through institutions - often large, complex, powerful, impersonal, not always competent, sometimes corrupt." He continues, "If a better society is to be built, one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then the most open course is to *raise both the capacity to serve* and the *very performance as servant* of existing major institutions by the generative forces operating within them."

**If believers are committed to a lifestyle of service, and if the People of God will build a better society, one that is more just, more loving, more Christian, and one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then local congregations must, to use Greenleaf's words, "raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance of a servant." This improvement will only happen as**

<sup>10</sup> Greenleaf, Robert K. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press, 2002.

pastors, Board members, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, nursery workers, ushers, and a host of others in the community of faith model a servant lifestyle.

But how do we as members of a local church exemplify a lifestyle transformation for both those we lead and our leaders? How do we teach the necessity for change in values, priorities, commitments, character qualities and an understanding that transformation is a lifelong pursuit? **How do we communicate with each other so that the Christian faith is presented not as an intellectualized belief to be learned, but a life to be lived?** How can we live together in a community of faith so that, to use Greenleaf's words, "caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other" increasingly characterizes the members of the faith community and the local church as a caring institution?

Ephesians 4:11-16 enunciates such a model. The passage outlines the context, task, goal, dynamic, and purpose for us as Christian leaders in our passion to equip students for a lifestyle of service.

*The context...is "God's people" (Ephesians 4:11). The key focus is participation.*

Since all Christians are called to serve others in Jesus' name, all Christians are also called to educate others in this lifestyle of service. Learning is not limited to the students in the classroom. It permeates all the different roles and responsibilities to which we commit ourselves. All of us are on a spiritual pilgrimage and are in process of becoming what God the Father, Creator, and Redeemer envisions for us.

*The task...is to "prepare God's people" (Ephesians 4:12). The key idea is formation.*

Christian formation, or preparing God's people, means enabling the individual to grow in Christ-likeness. This demands an acquaintance with the Christian tradition, an awareness of world issues, development of personal faith, competence in vocational skills, a philosophy of life, a global perspective and growth in community life.

We need guidance in developing a lifestyle of devotion to Christ, in caring for the world, nurturing our own spiritual lives, relating to other world citizens, developing personal qualities and inculcating values by which we live and die.

*The goal...is "works of service" (Ephesians 4:12). The key thought is expression.*

Our "works of service" or mission is a function and expression of the entire church. Our goal is to prepare God's people to participate in this mission, which is to proclaim the kingdom of God, nurture the People of God, and serve the whole human community. We must be captured by this vision. In the university setting, this means transcending service *to* the students and *for* the students, to service *with* the students and *by* the students.

*The dynamic...is "love within the Body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:15-16). The key concept is interaction.*

Interaction is defined as an intimacy of relationship between members within the Body of Christ. In every New Testament passage where the Body of Christ is discussed, there is a relational context in which this kind of mutual nurturing takes place. Passing on information does not produce a servant of Christ. Trust needs both to be explained and demonstrated in an

intimate relationship context. Love and trust free us to know and reveal ourselves to one another. *Modeling, rather than indoctrinating, is the method of leadership for lifestyle change.*

***The purpose...is transformation for a "holiness lifestyle" (Ephesians 4:13). The key issue is Christ-likeness.***

The purpose of Christian leadership is to, by grace, participate with God in the reconciling and transforming of humankind so that holy people may be equipped for a Christ-like ministry of service to others as they fulfill their vocational responsibility. This is also true in the context of a congregation. A holiness lifestyle focuses on the progressive transformation of the Christian toward the character, values, motives, attitudes and understanding of God Himself.

## **Personal Transformation: God's Vision for Us**

I'm fascinated with the stories ...the stories of university students, their families, their faith, how they heard about MVNU, and the miracles that occurred in each of their lives to bring them to MVNU. I'm strengthened in my faith and my work when I hear their stories.

Recently, I received an e-mail from a recent MVNU graduate. In the letter he shared part of his story with me. He gave me permission to share these words. It is a story of how God did "a new thing" in him. Jason tells us how God is beginning to shape a Christ-like character in him.

*Dr. Fairbanks,*

*I doubt that you will remember me, but I just wanted to drop you a quick email. I graduated a couple of years ago and had several conversations with you about Theater and New York City, where I will finally move to so I can pursue a career in acting and writing. I never told you while I was a student at MVNU, but you were someone who I looked up to and considered to be a good Christian man. You spoke several times in Chapel of your upbringing and the type of Father that you had. It sounded like we had similar childhoods. I too had an abusive Father who took out his daily frustrations of life out on his children. Your speaking about your Father helped me to realize that the cycle does not have to repeat itself like many of the studies show. I believe all people that have childhood's like that have moments of weakness, in which a certain emotion can come back to haunt us, but for the most part, through God and others, we realize that the repetition of the acts can stop. It was my greatest fear that I someday would participate in the same acts of my father. I have married a wonderful woman. She is a great Christian and has helped me realize that I must forgive my father for his actions in order to move on. I have forgiven my father; I don't like him; but I have forgiven him.*

*I also wanted to tell you another way that you were "Jesus" to me. While I attended MVNU, I was not your typical Nazarene student. I enjoyed drinking, smoking, and other immoral acts that are against the Christian faith. Most of the people I came across at the college looked down upon me, because they knew that I participated in these acts. I was friends with other people like me, others that smoked and drank with me. During all that time, I could tell you had a genuine love for the students like me, and that was greatly appreciated. I wish I had told you while I was still attending college, but everyone has those people in their lives that they look back upon and see them as instrumental people in their current walk with God. One of my biggest regrets in college is that I did not participate in more acts of service in the various activities that the college participates in. I wish I could do it all over again, but I can only start from this point on.*

*The reason I wanted to go to Mount Vernon was because I grew up with R. and J. The three of us were best friends. They were Nazarene and I was Baptist. I did not want to go to college after high school, and they went off to the Naz. After the accident and Jerrod died, I signed to go to the Naz just because I wanted to be*

*there for my best friend R., for he was going through a rough time. It seems like I should have known the errors of alcohol then, but I still ignored the signs and stories, and became maybe the biggest drinker the Naz has ever seen. I even bartended my way through college and became friends with many people in the community.*

*After graduation I moved to Columbus, where I continued to bartend at some clubs and worked during the day. One night after bartending, I had a freak stroke. I was rushed to the hospital, and it looked like I could die. I could not move my mouth or think properly, but I knew that I had treated Jesus improperly. My girlfriend who later became my wife was constantly working on me to listen to my heart, and this experience gave us both opportunities to grow more together and towards the Lord. I laid in the hospital for 8 days unable to move the left side of my body, and my mind seemed to work in slow motion. There were times I just wanted to die. After being released, I had a lot of therapy to go through. It was during all of this that I realized that I had to get myself straight and listen to what God wanted with my life. And miraculously, I can move both sides of my body, and I am strong and healthy. No stroke related symptoms bother me anymore.*

*My wife and I got married last October, and I have never been closer to God. Now at the end of this month, she and I will be moving to New York City, where I will pursue acting and writing, and my wife will go to law school. Two places that are in desperate need of Christ. I look forward to the challenge now of fulfilling my duties for Christ, I just wish I had done them sooner.*

*I guess I wanted to write this email for encouragement to you. I know it must be hard at times to see kids struggling with their Christian walk, but the only thing you can do for them is pray and continue to be an example. One of the biggest problems that I faced in college was constantly being judged, and I never felt that directed from you. Thank you Dr. Fairbanks for being an instrumental teacher in my Christian walk, even though you did not know it at the time. God Bless you, the campus, faculty, and all the students this school year,  
In Him,*

*An MVNU alumnus*

I'm thrilled about his marriage, his conversion to Christ, and his move to New York City. I've shared my excitement with him. But what stands out to you about his story? Among other things, I'm struck by his vision of his future. He knew what he wanted to do with his life. He fell short, however, in his vision of what to be in his life -- until his life was changed by radical faith in Christ.

Regardless of where we are on our spiritual journey, God is pursuing us and challenging us to be the person He wants us to be. I hope we are asking the character question - the **being** question - regarding our lives. What does God want you and me to BE?

Remember these points:

God's vision for us is that we be "men and women of good and godly character." (II Peter 3:11-12) (NIV: "What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.")

D. L. Moody once wrote, "If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself." Character is different from reputation. William Davis highlights the difference:

Reputation is what you are supposed to be;  
character is what you are....

Reputation is what you have when you come to a new community;  
 character is what you have when you go away.  
 Your reputation is made in a moment;  
 your character is built in a lifetime....  
 Reputation makes you rich or makes you poor;  
 character makes you happy or makes you miserable....  
 Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone;  
 character is what the angels say about you before the throne of  
 God.

In your leadership pursuit, are you more interested in your character or in your reputation? How can you know the difference? Let me ask you some questions, and your answers will distinguish the difference.

Who are your heroes?  
 What do you read?  
 How do you spend your free time?  
 What do you watch on TV or at the movies?  
 Are your words spoken to and about others: Up-building or undermining, encouraging or discouraging, truth or gossip?  
 How close to the edge are you living?

Character does count. Character is what you are when no one else is around. Character is who we are in the pressure times of our lives. Character springs from the core values by which we build our lives.

### **Christian character provides the moral compass by which we live our lives and lead a faith community.**

Character captures what it is we most want our children to inherit from us. Character is always the wellspring and foundation of our outward actions. Consequently, Christian character qualities must be intensely pursued.

I often ponder this question: Do people around us see in us the character qualities identified by Peter? Peter mentions in I Peter 1:5-7 the qualities of faith, goodness, knowledge (or discernment), self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. I'm afraid people around us may see or hear just the opposite, like a cynical tongue, a judgmental spirit, a negative attitude, a condescending demeanor, manipulation, lying, cheating, or immorality.

And these negative attitudes and behaviors, if we do not guard our thoughts and spirit, will eat us alive. Perhaps we, even on our campus or in a local church, have not escaped the temptation to cynicism, negativism, and condescension. God forgive us!

The Bible identifies for us very different character qualities to be intensely pursued, if we are to become men and women of good and godly character...who live holy and godly lives. Paul's list in Ephesians 4:2 includes humility, gentleness, patience, and kindness. The Old Testament prophet Micah asked, "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" Dr. Francis Hesselbein, executive editor of *Leader to Leader* publication, stated recently, "Leadership is about who you are, not what you do."

Character has powerful implications for Christian leaders. Namely, as leaders, we have a responsibility to be a role model, to help build character. To help our colleagues adopt the servant spirit, our responsibility is to model that spirit for them. This is to occur throughout the process of leading others, and in particular in developing leadership in others.

One of my major roles at MVNU is working closely with our leaders. In this mentoring process, I need to be aware of the potential mistakes leaders make. Discussions frequently take place around these “frequent” mistakes of a leader:

<u>MISTAKES</u>		<u>NECESSARY ALTERNATIVES</u>
1. inconsistency	-	consistency
2. indecisive	-	decisive
3. duplicity (saying one thing and doing another)	-	integrity (what you say is what you do)
4. reactive	-	proactive
5. “forked tongue” (lying)	-	honesty
6. impure motive	-	pure motive
7. lack of “stick-to-itiveness”	-	tenacity
8. “jumping around”	-	staying power
9. talks too much	-	listens before speaking
10. disloyalty	-	loyalty

Periodically, I pose the following questions to the MVNU leadership team:

1. Has your faith been strengthened or weakened as a result of your work at MVNU?
2. In what ways do your spiritual gifts match the responsibilities assigned to you?
3. With which of the MVNU core values (see booklet, “*For This We Stand*” at [www.mvnu.edu](http://www.mvnu.edu)) do you agree with most? Least? Which one needs strengthened?
4. What questions do you have for me?
5. How may I help you?

Modeling is the primary method or process by which leaders “pass on” the fundamental character qualities and values needed in future leaders.

As you can see, character building is an essential part of MVNU’s mission. MVNU’s values document outlines the character-building values we seek to instill in our students. This is available on the university home page ([www.mvnu.edu](http://www.mvnu.edu)) under “information about MVNU.” I want to mention just one section of the document:

*We love God; therefore, we seek to express these foundational values:*

- a. *A Worshipping Community*
- b. *A Biblical Faith*
- c. *A Christ-like Lifestyle*

- d. *A Holiness Ethic*
- e. *A Global Mission*
- f. *A Creation Vision*
- g. *A Spirit Empowered Devotion*

We want these values to characterize us at our best and to convict us at our worst. Remember,

**God's vision for us is that we be men and women of good and godly character...individuals who live holy and godly lives.**

Good and godly character must be intentionally developed in our lives. Hudson Taylor admonished<sup>11</sup>, "Pray as if it all depended on God and work as if it depended on you." Peter tells us in II Peter 1:3, that "God's divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness." On the other hand, in verse 5, we are challenged to "make every effort to add to your faith these qualities." In other words, the character qualities identified by Peter flow from a life that has been saved by God's grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, who calls us to a life of holy living.

Yet these very qualities of the holy life must be nurtured, cultivated, and developed throughout our lives if we truly are to be Christ-like. Christian character formation, I am coming to see, takes place over a lifetime, and is shaped through our responses to scriptural imperatives, and through a process of brokenness and prayer. I have discovered a painful yet fascinating relationship between brokenness and character development. I must continually ask the question in the conflict situations of life: what is God needing to teach me about my character through this circumstance or through this encounter . . . at MVNU, at home, or on the job?

Remember the chorus:

*His strength is perfect when our strength is gone,  
He'll carry us when we can't carry on;  
Raised in His power, the weak become strong;  
His strength is perfect; His strength is perfect.*

Five questions have helped me in a life-long pursuit of Christian character development. Perhaps they will help you.

1. Will this action strengthen me spiritually?
2. Would I want my child, my spouse, or my best friend to copy this action of mine?
3. Does this action violate a biblical principle?
4. Does this action strengthen the body of Christ?
5. Would an unbelieving friend be attracted to Christ and the Christian faith by my behavior?

The book *Becoming a Person of Influence*<sup>12</sup> states, "many succeed momentarily by what they know, some succeed temporarily by what they do, but few succeed permanently by who they are."

<sup>11</sup> Taylor, Hudson. **TITLE AND PUBLISHER INFORMATION STILL NEEDED.**

<sup>12</sup> Maxwell, John C. and Jim Dornan. *Becoming A Person Of Influence*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997.

Remember, Christian character formation is a life-changing and lifelong process, nurtured primarily by the spiritual disciplines of confession, silence, prayer, the trials and testing of our faith, and made effective in our lives by His grace and His strength alone! I often sing this chorus that I first heard at a Promise Keepers rally:

*Grace alone, which God supplies, strength unknown, He will provide,  
Christ in us, our Cornerstone; we will go forth in grace alone.*

## **Godly character development begins with the transforming work of God in our lives through the new birth.**

Nicodemus, in John chapter 3, verses 1-8 basically asked Jesus “How do I begin this quest for a ‘good and godly’ character – a holy and godly life?”

Nicodemus had an excellent **reputation**. He belonged to the strictest religious group of the day. He observed the law. He fasted regularly. He prayed often. He paid a tithe of his income. He was a member of the Sanhedrin. He was one of the 70 elders who governed the religious and social life of the people. He had authority and prestige. He was educated, well-off, and respected in the community.

And Jesus said to this man, “You must be born again.” When a person is “born again,” he/she is born anew by the Spirit of God. We come alive to spiritual truth. We receive a new nature. As a child of God, we partake of the holiness of God. There is in us a radical change of conduct and character.

II Corinthians 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old things have passed away, the new has come.” This is more than just patchwork, or outward reformation. This is an inner, moral transformation.

Nicodemus was puzzled (3:9-12; 16-21). The new birth, or new life in Christ, is a mystery because it is a miracle of God. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.” (II Corinthians 5:16-21). Christ took our sin upon himself and died in our place. He took the initiative and did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

So the question becomes for everyone of us: How will we respond to what God has done for us? We can respond in radical faith or we can remain in disbelief.

Are we living on our **reputation**, or do we know that we’ve been born again by the Spirit of God? Has Christ’s **character** been formed in us, and are we growing and maturing in Christ-likeness? If not, I encourage us to: 1) ask Him to forgive us for the sins we have committed; 2) believe that he came to save us and he can save us now; 3) confess Him as Lord of our life...our Savior, our Redeemer; and 4) confess that we want His life – His character – to be shaped in us.

Please ponder this question: “When we complete our present ministry assignment,

**Will we be remembered more for  
our character than for our reputation?”**



It took a hospital experience to show him, but Jason came to the realization that character was critical. Will we have to “hit the wall” before God gets our attention? How far do we have to slide from faith in and commitment to Christ before we realize the shallowness of our faith?

Peter comes down squarely on the side of godly character and holy living. He admonishes you and me to be “men and women of good and godly character” – individuals who live holy and godly lives. Individuals whose lives are characterized by faith, goodness, discernment, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Why? So that we will be effective and productive in the things that count for eternity!

God will enable and empower us to be just exactly the person He envisions and calls us to be. Are we willing and wanting to let God begin His new work in the lives of those whom we serve? Jason wished he had responded earlier.

On a sheet of paper with a line drawn through the middle of the paper indicating your life, indicate the “flow” of your life – the highs and lows – reflecting the “time line” of your life. Share with others the peaks above the line – when they occurred and why, as well as the lows.

If time permits, parallel this exercise for the church or group for which you now serve as leader. The highs? The lows? Why?

What lessons emerge regarding reconciliation and transformation, hope and character?

### Congregational and Corporate Transformation: “The Leader as Catalyst”

Many of the concepts we have been learning are spiritual disciplines or lessons that the Holy Spirit has to teach us. The leadership functions that are included in this chapter are skills that all of us can learn and seek to continue to improve. By applying these skills, our responsibility as spiritual leaders is to first look to God in worship and devotion; we need to **reach up** to seek God’s wisdom and His guidance. After prayerfully seeking Him in prayer and in His Word, take time to plan.

The specific tasks of planning include assessing our congregations’ needs, clarifying our ministry and mission, determining programs, and establishing goals. Here are some key questions to ask:

- Who are we?
- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- Why?

Having a clear vision and clarifying our mission will help us set appropriate goals. It will also help us explain the purpose to those with whom we will be working. Knowing the “purpose” or why is important to groups because it helps all of us focus our energy more effectively. From a theological perspective, we “envision” those with whom we work and plan as the People of God, the Community of Faith, the Body of Christ, the Fellowship of the Spirit, a Spirit-led and Spirit-filled People, a Ministering People - called, gifted, trained and sent - and a Growing People.

Once the vision is clear and your mission set, it is important to organize the process. The task is to implement the vision. Questions to ask are “How will we get there?” and “When will we get there?” Put deadline dates on each part of the process. You will have a much higher probability of completing your goal, if there is a date attached with it. Organizing the goals and determining when

they are to be completed will give you a map or a structure to the process. It will help keep you and your congregation on track.

One leadership responsibility that often is given lip-service is being a good motivator. The task is to mobilize our congregation to complete the agreed-upon goals. Determine who will be responsible for each part of the process or plan. Motivation is more than generating enthusiasm and buy-in from the people being served. It is giving them the training or the tools to work on the mission. Motivating others is critical. The work that God has for us is too big to be done alone. We must help others recognize their calling and their gifts as well as train them.

Another leadership requirement is being a good evaluator. This involves reviewing the process, acquiring feedback, and changing the process or structure or deadline, if changes need to be made in order to complete the goals. Typical questions are “Were we successful?” “What needs improvement?” “Where are we?” “When do we make changes?” “How do we best use this information?” The motivating force is optimism. By assessing where we are and how we are doing, we can celebrate our successes as we reach intermediate goals. Evaluating also gives us a baseline to compare as you instigate other programs, processes, benchmarks and baselines. The graph on the following page shows how the functions of a leader can be used to facilitate congregational transformation.

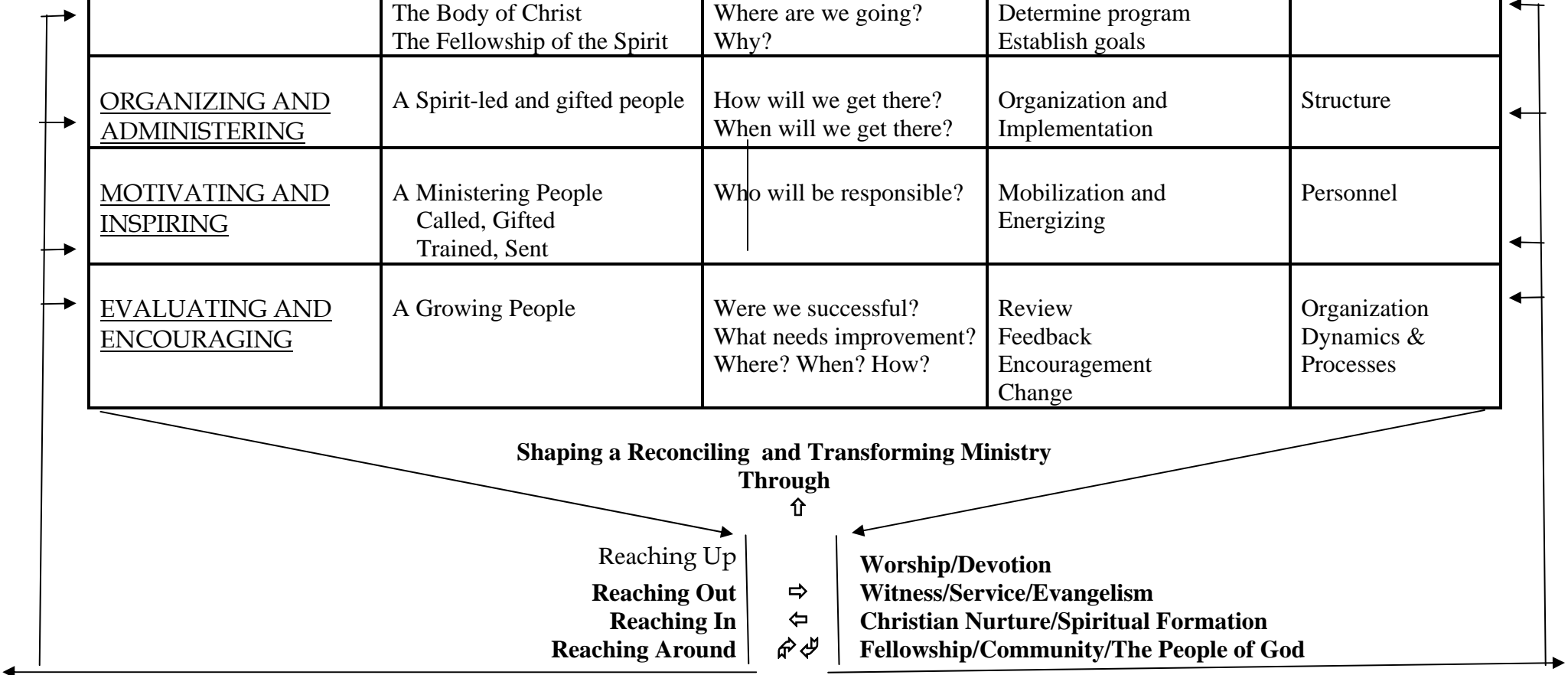
<b>THE LEADER AS CATALYST FOR CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION</b>		<b>KEY QUESTIONS</b>	<b>SPECIFIC TASKS</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CONCERNS</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS</b>				
<u>DREAMING AND PLANNING</u>	The People of God The Community of Faith The Body of Christ The Fellowship of the Spirit	Who are we? Where are we now? Where are we going? Why?	Clarify vision and mission Assess congregation Determine program Establish goals	Purpose
<u>ORGANIZING AND ADMINISTERING</u>	A Spirit-led and gifted people	How will we get there? When will we get there?	Organization and Implementation	Structure
<u>MOTIVATING AND INSPIRING</u>	A Ministering People Called, Gifted Trained, Sent	Who will be responsible?	Mobilization and Energizing	Personnel
<u>EVALUATING AND ENCOURAGING</u>	A Growing People	Were we successful? What needs improvement? Where? When? How?	Review Feedback Encouragement Change	Organization Dynamics & Processes

**Shaping a Reconciling and Transforming Ministry  
Through**

Reaching Up  
Reaching Out  
Reaching In  
Reaching Around



**Worship/Devotion**  
**Witness/Service/Evangelism**  
**Christian Nurture/Spiritual Formation**  
**Fellowship/Community/The People of God**



## **Further Thought on Christian Leadership and Congregational Transformation**

### **The Dynamics of Christian Leadership**

#### **a. Defining a Vision**

Vision is defined as: "The ability to see clearly and at a great distance." Christian vision should tell who we are as Christians, where are we going, why are we going there, and how we are going to get there? Life is lived and viewed in Kingdom perspectives.

Leadership is the Transference of Vision. Without vision, no creative work of significance has ever come to birth. Imagination, or vision, is the fuel through which information is converted into creative energy. Imagination, or vision, rules the universe of great events.

Fundamental to Christian leadership is a theological vision. Again, vision has to do with seeing things clearly and at a great distance. It is seeing what others do not see and is a consuming, passionate, compelling inner picture. This type of vision is needed for the Christian leader: a theological vision for the People of God who he/she is leading!

How do we "envision" the people who we work with in our present ministry assignment? Do we have a consuming, passionate, compelling inner picture (vision) of: who they are as the People of God, how they may live together as the family of God, and what they are called to do with their lives in the plan of God?

This requires a theological vision! To build a vision you must ask these questions:

- If you knew you couldn't fail, where would you like to be five years from now?
- What if?
- Why not?

A very important function of a Christian leader (who has theological vision of the individuals with whom he/she works) is creating a vision of the group's preferred future. A vision tells the world who the organization is, how it will operate, how it will deal with its stakeholders both internal and external, and what values and principles it will attempt to live out as it pursues its ministry assignment. A vision channels our values into the work environment and becomes a word picture of how we want our values to be lived out.

A vision statement is an expression of optimism and hope. It is a dream of what we would like the church, university or organization to be like. `Consider the vision statement for Mount Vernon Nazarene University:

**An academic community of faith shaping Christ-like leaders for life long service and global impact.  
Ephesians 4:11-13**

Passion. Energy. Enthusiasm. Optimism. Faith. These leadership dynamics fuel vision. Robert Kennedy asked, "Some people see things as they are and say why; I dream about things that never were and say, why not?" A great vision building statement by Philander Chase, in 1824, founder of Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, is:

**"The difficult is that which is worth doing."**

Visionary leaders have an unswerving courage under pressure with a "poorly developed sense of fear and no concept of the odds against them," stated Dr. Robert Jarvik, inventor of the Jarvik-7 artificial heart.

Don't overlook your personal vision and mission. I shared the following "personal vision" with the MVNU Board of Trustees in March of 2001:

"There is a new sense of urgency within me to spend quality time throughout the next ten years in teaching and writing, particularly in the areas of Christian spirituality, Christian leadership, and Christian community. I am increasingly committed to developing national church leadership and strengthening local church leadership, focusing on spiritual formation and leadership ethics. I feel these initiatives could be pursued without interfering with my leadership responsibilities at MVNU."

In another Board meeting, I shared with the Board that the following four priorities would guide me in making decisions regarding the use of my time:

1) Spiritual leadership to the campus community - staff, faculty, senior administrators, students - and beyond; 2) University-wide strategic thinking, planning and implementation; 3) Christian leadership development regionally and worldwide; and 4) Major donor cultivation and gifting and endowment development for MVNU.

**Early in my tenure at MVNU, I spent quality time forging a mission statement that addressed twin concerns of mine - personal (including family) and professional (MVNU responsibility).**

My mission is to be a Christian role model and leader to my family first, and subsequently to the Mount Vernon Nazarene University community in the context of servant and visionary leadership. I will give attention to the financial needs of my family, including retirement, and keep myself physically and emotionally conditioned to enable me to function with maximum effectiveness. I am a growing professional who gives priority time to strategic planning for the institution I serve. In this context, I will enable and energize my family, friends, and colleagues to give their best to their unique roles and assignments. All of my activities initiate from and operate out of a pastoral calling as one who views himself first and foremost as a follower of Jesus who articulates, models, and is committed to His life and teachings.

Developing theological, organizational and personal vision statements take time. If you have not already done so, block off some time to get away from the routine and begin the process. Give yourself several months for the process to germinate and bear fruit. Share your draft statement with family, trusted friends, colleagues, pastor, teacher, mentor or with your governing Board for feedback. It is a transforming experience!

### **THE BIG QUESTION AGAIN!**

**How can my ministry of  
Christian leadership enable  
others to fulfill their ministry  
to each other and mission in  
the world in the context of a  
dynamic laboratory of  
learning how to live together  
as God's children?**

## **Grace ... and the Grace-Full Leader**

Taken from the book with permission from *Grace-Full Leadership: Understanding the Heart of a Christian Leader* by John C. Bowling<sup>13</sup>

The Qualities of a Grace-Full Leader...they

- are more concerned with spirit than style
- are covenantal rather than contractual
- view people as ends – not means
- recognize the changeable from the changeless
- seek significance, not just success
- are responsive as well as responsible
- are high-touch
- maximize influence and minimize authority
- are passionate
- focus primarily on the body, not the head

The Traits of a Grace-Full Leader...they

- understand accountability
- interact rather than react
- follow their “knows”
- are willing to follow as well as lead
- maintain their balance
- have double-vision
- “go deep”
- are skilled meteorologists
- anticipate through planning, pathfinding, planting, and prospecting
- take care

### **Reflections on the Qualities and Traits of Grace-Full Leaders**

Grace-full leaders are more concerned with spirit than with style. Leading from the inside out is an expression of grace-full leadership. A grace-full leader has the right combination of confidence and humility to recognize strengths and weaknesses and to consciously seek to build character, competency, and the confidence of those who are led. This formula is a key component of leadership. Leadership is the tapestry of integrity of heart and life, words and deeds, thoughts and actions.

*Question:* If an individual is to be a grace-full leader, God must be rightly placed at the center of his or her life, work, and relationships. How does one measure or know that God is in the center of every aspect of an individual’s life? Is He at the center of your life, work, and relationships?

Grace-full leaders are more concerned with covenantal rather than contractual relationships. Contracts take the place of trust; covenants express it, for trust is at the heart of a covenantal relationship. While most relationships have some elements of both, at some point all relationships become essentially one or the other. Contractual relationships exist

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<sup>13</sup> Bowling, John. *Grace-Full Leadership*. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2000.

because of what people *do* for each other. Covenantal relationships exist because of what people *are* or *mean* to each other.

*Question:* Trust is foundational to covenantal relationships. What are three characteristics of trust and how can they be manifested in who we are?

Grace-full leaders view people as ends—not means. While occasionally within organizational life things do change and people are displaced, nonetheless, the grace-full leader seeks to foster an environment where people can flourish. Leadership that does not promote the overall welfare of the people involved might appear to be efficient and powerful, but it is not Christian. Grace-full leaders recognize the dignity of others and affirm the diversity of their gifts. Everyone comes with certain gifts—but not the same gifts. A polar bear is as unique as a stingray, but don't ask a polar bear to survive under water or a stingray on polar ice. The challenge is to match the person to the position and need at any given time.

*Question:* How does an environment where individuals accept one another's weaknesses as well as strengths allow an individual to change, grow, and develop?

Grace-full leaders recognize the changeable from the changeless. Change can be a genuine opportunity for renewal, but the problem is the "change has no constituency." That is to say, most people do not like change. Change often means letting go of things that are familiar and moving into unknown territory. Even when a person does not like things as they are, he or she may still find it hard to venture into the unknown. In order to successfully determine what should change and what should not, and then to effectively manage those things, you must first be comfortable with the realities of change in your own life. If the followers are to respond positively, the leader must first accept the pace and necessity of change.

*Question:* What are the factors that shape and mold us? Some of those forces are outside our control, but there are also forces at work with us. What are the forces within us from which character flows? How can we develop these forces?

Grace-full leaders seek significance, not just success. In the New Testament it becomes clear that although we must work, our primary calling (vocation) is to repentance, faith, fellowship, and service. Men and women are called to be new creations in Christ. This call *to be* precedes the call *to do*. The Bible doesn't indicate that God calls us to an earthly profession or trade. Paul, for example, is called by God to be an apostle; he is not "called" to be a tentmaker as shared by Elton Trueblood in *Your Other Vocation*.<sup>14</sup>

*Question:* In a summary paragraph, explain Robert Slocum's five guidelines for integrating faith and vocational work.

So faith makes a difference in how one views work and how one works. Bringing the gospel to all of life can flood a person's working hours with new meaning and new potential. The hours spent at work can become "Kingdom hours" that provide a powerful witness to the world of the grace and glory of God. It is vital to the church, the individual, and the world at

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<sup>14</sup> Trueblood, Elton. *Your Other Vocation*. PUBLISHER INFORMATION STILL NEEDED.



large that a true integration of faith and work take place in the life of every believer. As this happens, success gives way to significance.

Grace-full leaders are responsive as well as responsible. Being responsive allows an organization to discontinue practices no longer effective. Most good ideas and effective methods run their course in time and need to be replaced with other good ideas and effective methods. The “we’ve always done it that way” attitude is often hard to overcome because the weight of tradition and organizational history supports the tried-and-true ways of the past. The responsive leader has the ability to recognize when new outcomes are needed and when old methods may not be sufficient.

*Question:* What is the primary response of the responsive leader?

Grace-full leadership is “high-touch” in at least four dimensions. You must stay in touch with (1) yourself, (2) the internal and external environment in which you must function, (3) those whom you lead, and (4) God.

*Question:* Explain at least four dimensions of grace-full leaders being “high-touch.”

Grace-full leaders maximize influence and minimize authority. Whenever possible, grace-full leaders seek to lead through influence rather than authority. The difference between the two approaches strikes at the heart of why and how employees/members/followers choose to respond to leadership initiatives. If the only method of motivation is the authority of the leaders, the response of the follower will no doubt be a minimal commitment. The follower may comply with his hands, but not his head or heart.

*Question:* What does walk softly and carry a big heart and a generous spirit mean in terms of grace-full leadership?

Grace-full leaders are passionate. They must have something of Sisyphus’s tenacity and perseverance. Just as they must have the courage and energy of Odysseus, leaders must also have the perseverance and determination of Sisyphus. We would like for all our work to be exciting and immediately rewarding, but it isn’t always that way; much of life and labor is tough and boring and routine, and therein lies the challenge to excellence. For grace-full leaders merely to repeat Jesus’ words is not to continue His work; they must be intent on reproducing His life and passion. Such leaders are not building their kingdoms, but His; Grace-full leaders are passionate people, set aflame by the Spirit.

*Question:* How does one overcome the routine of our work and our mission?

Grace-full leaders focus primarily on the body, not the head. A spirit of community doesn’t just happen; it must be fashioned and fostered, nourished and maintained. Community can be a fragile thing in many ways. Relationships can be broken; isolation can set in; and communication can dissipate. Employees and coworkers can drift apart, living in their own little worlds, almost untouched by the others.

*Question:* What type of an environment will a grace-full leader create and why?

Grace-full leaders understand accountability. Accountability means that leaders take responsibility for their words and actions. And just as one is accountable *to* others, the grace-full leader is also accountable *for* others. Leaders must bear a sense of responsibility for the individuals with whom and for whom they work. Leaders often are called upon to balance the needs of people and of the institution.

*Question:* Give a short explanation of seven manifestations of character.

Grace-full leaders interact rather than react. Interactive leadership is a recognition that we may legitimately act in different ways at different times, depending on the interaction we have with the circumstances confronting us. Management is both a science and an art. This is the art part. It is a way to maximize our timing and to learn from the environment as we plan our proactive and reactive responses.

*Question:* How do the four responses to uncertainties or ever-changing environments reflect a leader's image of himself or herself?

Grace-full leaders follow their "knows." Following your "knows" involves getting the right information, talking with the right people, and balancing that input with your instincts and inner compass—but there is more. Ultimately, for the Christian leader, knowing must also include the spiritual dimension. God has promised wisdom and guidance, protection and empowerment. The grace-full leader knows he or she must stay in tune with God and follow His leadership. Of all the things there is to know, knowing God is most important.

*Question:* Give four parallels between sailing and leadership and why they are important to remember.

Grace-full leaders are willing to follow as well as lead. I suppose that "a leader who follows" might, at first glance, appear to be an oxymoron as well. However, the grace-full leader knows that learning to follow is one of the first great lessons of leadership. This idea of leaders as followers may take some getting used to for some. It seems just the opposite of the normal role of leadership, which is commonly understood as being out front, pointing the way, and giving the orders.

*Question:* Explain the statement "We can lead only as we follow."

Grace-full leaders maintain their balance. Balance in life prevents becoming an extremist or being eccentric in beliefs, attitudes, and actions. It keeps the pressures of success and failure in proper balance. Dealing with adversity and prosperity are two extreme tests. Both challenge your ability to remain steady and focused and to keep spiritual equilibrium. And of the two, perhaps success is the hardest.

*Question:* List the three components of leadership and describe how they interact with balance for the grace-full leader.

Grace-full leaders have double vision. Leadership demands that you see both what is and what can be. This "double-vision" helps enable us to keep our sights set on the future as we deal with the daily demands of leadership.

*Question:* What transforms our visions and brings them into spiritual focus?

Grace-full leaders “go deep.” Grace-full leaders know that having wet feet rather than cold feet means they must start—must be willing to take those first steps of leadership. No matter how unlikely the timing or difficult the circumstances or impossible the task, it falls to the leader to lead.

*Question:* The life of every leader is filled with moments when he or she must trust. What are you going to do when the water gets deep and the going gets tough?

Grace-full leaders are skilled meteorologists. Every organization has a “climate.” A skilled leader knows how to react to various organizational weather patterns—storms, calm, high pressure, thunder, and lightning. Leadership is, in many ways, a foul-weather job because that’s when a leader is most severely tested. One cannot always avoid the winds, the snow, and the sleet, but a leader can prepare for them. Anticipating the storm is one key responsibility of a leader.

*Question:* Explain why an effective leader is both a weather forecaster and a weather factor.

Grace-full leaders anticipate through planning, pathfinding, planting, and prospecting. Good leaders create positive energy that helps people overcome obstacles, break free from inertia, and rise to new challenges and levels of performance. They act in the present with the future in mind—they anticipate.

*Question:* List the seven key areas of planning and define each.

Grace-full leaders take care. Grace-full leaders learn to take care of their organizations, themselves, and their relationship to God. Unless care is consistently given to each aspect of life, a person’s leadership can be eroded. Grace-full leaders are aware that an organization is held together by shared values, beliefs, and commitments. This is what gives it fiber, integrity, and the capacity to endure cyclical hardships. Since organizations are people, the first way to care for the organization is to hire the right people—individuals who are committed to the core values of the organization. One of leadership’s classic axioms is to “hire for attitude and train for skills.”

*Question:* How does a leader find time to take care of his or her organization, his or herself, and his or her relationship with God with all the other items to do?

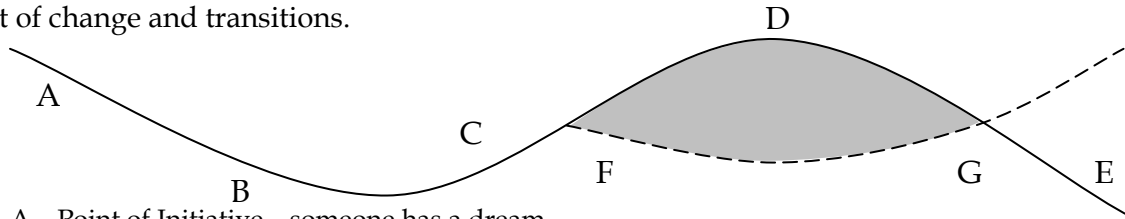
Learning to lead is a lifelong process. It doesn’t happen by reading a book or taking a course or wishing it were so. We all learn to lead by leading. And learning to lead is also a part of learning to live with purpose and meaning beyond our own interests and abilities. The world is waiting for a new generation of leaders—men and women whose mission is more than profit, whose morality is not contextual, and whose very life is an expression of grace; leaders who will manage themselves, inspire others, and forge the future.

### **The Sigmoid Curve**

Understanding transitions is important for the leader. The “Sigmoid Curve” helps you conceptualize inevitable transition in the church or institutions you serve. Questions for church leaders:

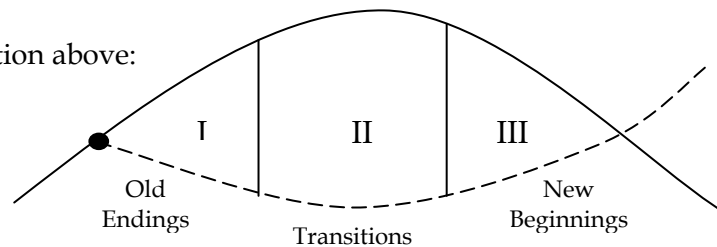
Do congregations (and individuals) go through numerical (and spiritual) cycles? Are the cycles inevitable? How do they regain momentum in the midst of cycles?

In the book, *Managing Transitions*<sup>15</sup>, by William Bridges, the 'cycle' is discussed in the context of change and transitions.



- A - Point of Initiative - someone has a dream
- B - Time of Resourcing the Vision - you slow down to resource your dream
- C - Growth - the vision takes hold
- D - When the organization is most effective and efficient
- E - Decline - when the same things are done as in earlier years
- F - Breakout time/vision - takes place during "prime" time
- G - Turnaround vision - a crucial point when leadership has responsibility to start a new "S" curve

A break-out view of F - G section above:



Regarding the "Old Endings," the leader must ask, "What are the 'old endings' that must go?" and "What are the core values of the 'old' that must be retained?"

Regarding the "Transition" period, the leader's role is to articulate the "end" vision but retain core convictions. The leader during this period of change and transition must model consistency, steadiness, integrity, respect, trust and communication.

Regarding "New Beginnings," the leader must engage the people in institutionalizing the transition through which you are going, and toward which you are moving. The leader must continue to model the Christian character qualities of Ephesians 4 and I Peter 1, especially in conflict situations and with congregational members who differ with you.

There is a critical time when Pastor and Board have the responsibility to start a new "S" curve. Further questions for pastors:

1. Where is your congregation in the cycle?
2. What should be the role of pastoral leadership in this cycle?
3. What should be the role of pastoral leadership, regarding "F" and "G" alone?

<sup>15</sup> Bridges, William. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Perseus Publishing, 1991.

**Conclusion**

Transformation of self and the congregation was the focus of Theme Three, PURPOSE. We now understand the role of character (transformation of self) in servant leadership (transformation of congregation). The well established Sigmoid Curve helps us envision how transformation takes time, and is not always received by all members in the same way. Now, in Theme Five, PROOF, we will explore the all too often reality of conflict within the faith community when good and godly people collide, particularly over vision and values. Then in chapter six, we will delve into qualitative growth of those we lead. Specifically, we will investigate in some detail the core qualities, values, and attitudes of the servant leader that best bring the PROOF or qualitative indicators of growth of the led.

# *Theme Four*

**THE METHOD  
OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS  
ROOTED IN SPIRITUAL  
FORMATION, SHARED VISION,  
MODELING AND  
COLLABORATION.**

## *Theme Four*

### **THEME THREE: THE METHOD OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS ROOTED IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION, SHARED VISION, MODELING AND COLLABORATION.**

*"We must be captured by this vision which transcends ministry to the people, and ministry for the people, to ministry with and ministry by the people." -Ross Kinsler*

#### **OVERVIEW OF THEME STRUCTURE**

Introduction: Intentionally Nurturing the Spiritual Life for Mission and Ministry

- Model: Teaching Others to Lead Christianly
- Mentoring as Ministry Development
- The Pastor/Leader as Mentor to the Church Board or Governing Board
- If you are the Person Being Mentored...
- "The Power of Three" - Working Together in the Body of Christ
- Summary of "Twelve Theses for Kingdom Servanthood in Post Communist Europe"
- Key Questions from Kingdom Servanthood article for mission and ministry development
- Conclusion

#### **Introduction: Intentionally Nurturing the Spiritual Life for Mission and Ministry**

How do we *intentionally* nurture the spiritual life within us and within others for mission and ministry effectiveness in the midst of our family, our work and our many other commitments? Look at the ministry of Abba Arsenius, well-educated Roman tutor in a royal household in the fourth century in Rome. He asked the Lord, "What shall I do to save my soul?" The answers he received are appropriate as we seek to spend time in solitude, silence and prayer.

The Lord responded twice to Arsenius, "Flee, be silent, and pray always." Arsenius and other monks went into the Egyptian desert to escape the spiritual pollution, as they saw it, of the culture and society of which they were a part. These desert fathers, especially Arsenius, have something very timely for us today as we seek to intentionally nurture the spiritual life within and among us.

The Lord said to Arsenius, "Flee," or embrace solitude. Arsenius took God's word to mean that he was to embrace solitude, which meant going to the desert. Solitude is a time of inner stillness and "aloneness" before God. It provides for us the opportunity to shift our attention from our restlessness to the peace of God. These 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century monks—the Desert Fathers—withdraw to the Egyptian desert. The writings they left are referred to as "Desert Spirituality." These men revolted against the tenets and values of their society, because they wanted to escape the "shipwreck" of their society.

The desert provided a geographical space of intense solitude. I experienced this same sense of solitude while traveling through the Jordanian desert with my wife to visit our son. Experiencing the desert elements gave me a glimpse of how extreme the desert can be, regarding the intense heat and isolation.

Solitude is a quality of the heart or an inner disposition, not always a physical place. Such profound stillness is not always easy for us to find, and for most of us it does not include retreating to a desert. In the midst of much noise and many people though, we have a need to find within ourselves a place of quiet – a place where we can be quiet before God.

This quiet time is imperative for disciples, as we do not have an opportunity to enjoy lengthy experiences of solitude in the desert or otherwise; we are in need of finding the essence of these experiences within ourselves. Solitude is a means to facilitate inner stillness and aloneness before God. During my sabbatical, I was convicted by God about the “busyness” of my schedule, and how little time I schedule to withdraw in solitude before Him. God seemed to say, “If you plan a year in advance the meeting time and dates for your senior administrators, why not plan just as diligently for solitude with me?”

During a January class term, a psychology professor at MVNU taught a class on “Psychology of the Contemplative Life.” The course included five days at a Trappist Monastery in Kentucky. I would encourage you to visit such a retreat center in your own quest for solitude. It is in solitude that we find space for God. Pray, “Speak to me, Lord, regarding my need for times of solitude with you.”

Secondly, the Lord said to Arsenius, “Be Silent.” As you may recall, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together*<sup>16</sup>, identifies seven expressions of ministry including the ministry of listening and of holding one’s tongue. In his book, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*<sup>17</sup>, Henri Nouwen states,

**“When the door of the steam bath is continually left open, the heat inside rapidly escapes through it.”**

How often we open our mouths and speak about events of the world, about people, or circumstances, and how seldom we close our mouths and listen to God and to others within the body of Christ? I am often reminded of Psalms 39:1, which states, “I will keep a muzzle on my mouth... I will not...let my tongue lead me into sin.”

We need silence... for spiritual reading, starting with the Bible. Last semester, I was drawn especially to two New Testament books, I and II Corinthians. I Corinthians 2:16b, “But we have the mind of Christ.” “Teach spiritual things spiritually” (I Corinthians 2:13) or as God has given it to me to lead a Christian college Christianly. II Corinthians 5:16, “So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.” II Corinthians 4:7, “Jars of clay” to show this is from God, not from us. I read and re-read I & II Thessalonians. I was challenged anew with the Christology of Colossians. The Gospel of John served to remind me of the life and teachings of Jesus.

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<sup>16</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1978.

<sup>17</sup> Nouwen, Henri. *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, reprint edition, 1991.



We also need silence ...for spiritual writing or journaling. Again, the question for me is not "where will I make the greatest impact or greatest contribution to the Kingdom," but "how can I grow in faithfulness and obedience?" We must be committed to a new level of consistency with daily prayer. We must intentionally focus on spiritual alternatives to TV, telephone and radio, instead choose reading devotional classics; books that nurture and strengthen your daily walk with Christ. Pray, "Speak to me, Lord, regarding my need for silence before You."

The Lord said to Arsenius, "Pray always." How can we follow the biblical injunctions to pray constantly, pray unceasingly and to pray always? Let's examine some different characteristics of prayer to achieve this goal.

There are speaking prayers, both intercessory and prayers of praise and thanksgiving. You can use a prayer journal for your ministry of intercessory prayer similar to the one suggested at the end of each theme development. A typical journal includes a date of entry in one column; specific people and concerns in the second column; and then the third column includes specific acts of love, encouragement, and ministries of service. We seek to answer the question: What does God want me to do? When we are specific and include the "when," "who," "where" and "how," we have a higher percentage of completing the service.

Wonderful examples of prayers of praise and thanksgiving can be found by reading aloud the Psalms. Prayer books are also very helpful (such as John Badie's *The Diary of Private Prayer*).

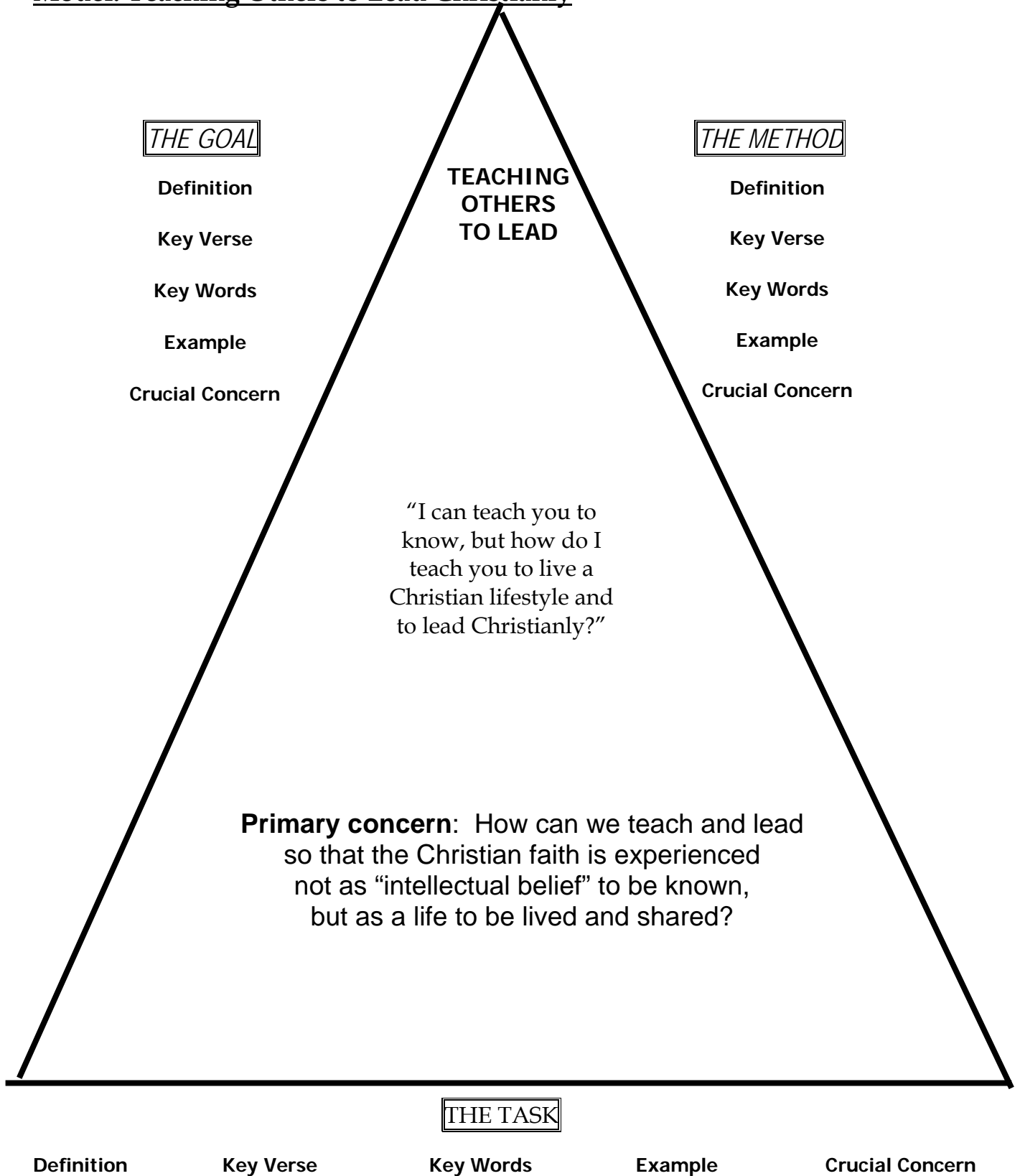
There are listening prayers. The prophet Samuel prayed, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant is listening." And so should we! There are thinking prayers. Nouwen says, "To pray, I think, ... means to think and live in the presence of God... What I mean is that we convert our unceasing thinking into unceasing prayer when we move from self-centered monologue to a God-centered dialogue." We can live a life of prayer if we view prayer as our thoughts becoming expressions of prayer and praise to God.

Regarding our vocation of prayer, Nouwen states, "When I speak of prayer, I refer less to saying prayers than to living a prayerful life in which eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, working and praying are all done to the honor and glory of God." He goes on to quote a Russian Orthodox monk, who defined prayer as "standing in the presence of God with our mind in our heart."

Increasingly we need to pray, "Speak to me, Lord, regarding my need to live with open hands a life of prayer before You...constantly."

Embrace solitude, be silent, and pray constantly. These three disciplines nurture the spiritual life within and among us. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God [put first things first], and all these things will be added unto you." Let's find ways to support each other as we become more intentional about nurturing, fostering, and forming the spiritual life within and among us. Amen!

**Model: Teaching Others to Lead Christianly**



## Teaching Others to Lead Christianly

How do we determine if we have succeeded in our teaching and leadership assignment? What is the definition Jesus had of success?

In general terms, we begin to answer the initial question when we understand ourselves as servants, motivating, equipping and enabling others to serve in Jesus' name. Luke 6:40 is significant: "...When a student is fully trained he will become like his teacher." We want those for whom we are responsible to see in us a servant spirit committed to motivating, equipping, and enabling them to serve others in Jesus' name. But as a leader, how do you teach a lifestyle? You teach a lifestyle through the principle of imitation. Refer again to Paul's examples:

- "Follow me as I follow Christ." (I Corinthians. 11:1)
- "You ought to follow my example." (II Thessalonians 3:7)
- "Put into practice what you have learned, received or heard from me or seen in me..." (Philippians 4:9)
- "We did this in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow." (II Thessalonians 3:9)

A paradigm for teaching a Christian lifestyle can be based on Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4:11-16 (summarized): He gave gifts...to some...to guide and teach his people...So that Christians might be properly equipped for their service... That the body might be built up...until we arrive at real maturity.... (Therefore) we are meant to speak the truth in love, and to grow up in every way unto Christ, the head.

THE TASK: The equipping of believers (Ephesians 4:12).

Definition: Preparing others to reproduce themselves spiritually.

Key Verse: II Timothy 2:2

Key Words: Discipling, Reproduction, Priorities

Example: Jesus and His disciples (the Gospels)

Crucial Concern: Teaching in such a way that the 'student' will be like his teacher, pastor, professor, or mentor.

THE GOAL: Ministry through believers (Ephesians 4:12b-13).

Definition: Serving others in the name of Jesus.

Key Verse: II Corinthians 5:16-20

Key Words: Reconciliation, Unity, Maturity

Example: Paul and the Thessalonians (I and II Thessalonians)

Crucial Concern: Every believer participating in the ministry of reconciliation as God has gifted, called, and "stationed" each of them.

THE METHOD: Closeness with believers (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Definition: An emotional closeness between the leader and the led within the body of Christ.

Key Verse: Hebrews 10:24-25

Key Words: Modeling, Relationships

Example: Paul to Titus, Timothy, and Philippian believers.

Crucial Concern: Creating a learning environment that exhibits in practice what is said in word.

## Mentoring as Ministry Development

A mentor communicates in word and deed that God is more interested in our character than our comfort. Constantly communicated by example more than by words is the truth that God wants for me to be available to Him, not to do things to prove I'm valuable to Him. **"He/she is known as one who goes around doing good,"** said Dr. Jim Bond, General Superintendent for the Church of the Nazarene. Dr. Richard Haygood, Northwest Nazarene University President, on the retirement of Dr. Sam Dunn, Vice President of Academic Affairs, stated, "He combined the twin attributes of intellectual competence and spirituality with a spirit of optimism and grace." What a compliment to an outstanding mentor!

Two fundamental mentoring questions are:

1. How can we live and work together as the People of God so that our relationships are redemptive and a witness to others of the reconciling work of God in Christ?
2. How can we more consistently relate the foundations of scriptural holiness to our lifestyle, especially within the body of Christ - the community of faith?

Two basic questions both mentor and mentored should ask:

1. When am I at my best (or most effective)? Is it in living before the faith community a reconciled and reconciling holiness lifestyle?
2. When am I at my worst (or least effective)?

Other questions a mentor asks an individual or group he/she is mentoring:

What kind of future do you envision for your church or ministry assignment?

What are your dreams for the group for which you are responsible?

How are you doing, personally?

How are you progressing in your ministry assignment?

How can I help you?

In the mentoring relationship, discussions frequently take place around these “fatal” mistakes of a leader:

Mistakes		Necessary Alternative
11. inconsistency	-	consistency
12. indecisiveness	-	decisiveness
13. duplicity (saying one thing and doing another)	-	integrity (what you say is what you do)
14. reactivity	-	pro-activeness
15. “forked tongue” (lying)	-	honesty
16. impure motive	-	pure motive
17. lack of “sticktuitiveness”	-	tenacity
18. “jumping around”	-	staying power
19. talking too much	-	listening before speaking
20. disloyalty	-	loyalty

A good question to ask a future leader whom you are mentoring, who tends to talk rather continuously about the problems with little attention to possible solutions is, “Therefore, what...?”

**“Mentoring is...a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protégé reach her or his God-given potential.” - Bob Biehl, *Mentoring***

The core elements of the World Missions Division of the Church of the Nazarene in the mentoring and training of new missionaries are:

- Personal Development
  - Relationship Management
  - Spirituality
  - Psychosocial health
- Practical Skills
  - Teaching
  - Leadership Development
  - Ordained Elder
  - Accounting/Compassionate Ministries
- Professional Development
  - Language Development
  - Cultural Awareness
  - Leadership Development
  - Contextualization
  - Global Perspective
  - Foundations of Christian Faith – discipleship/evangelism
  - World Religious/Philosophical ideologies
  - Foundations of Mission and Evangelism

Begin to define the areas in your leadership setting where mentoring is needed. Use the list above as a starting point to look at specific issues needing to be addressed. Identify positions you feel are most in need of attention. Focus on individuals whom you believe would be responsive to a mentoring relationship.

To help you develop a mentoring process, you may want to develop your own list of mentoring questions based on the questions I ask periodically to the leadership team at MVNU. I ask these questions to people for whom I feel a keen mentoring responsibility.

1. Why do you work at MVNU?
2. Has your faith been strengthened or weakened as a result of your work at MVNU?
3. In what ways do your spiritual gifts match the responsibilities assigned to you?
4. Where do you feel most vulnerable or weak?
5. With which of the MVNU core values (see booklet, *"For This We Stand"*) do you agree with most? Least? Which one needs strengthened or eliminated?
6. With which of the MVNU "Guiding Principles" (see document by same title) do you most resonate? Least? Why? What can we do to strengthen the "Guiding Principles" statement?
7. How are you working to more effectively communicate MVNU's mission and vision to the staff and faculty with whom you work most closely and those employees in your administrative division?
8. What questions do you have for me?
9. How can I help you? How can I help you to increase your effectiveness in your leadership role?
10. What would you like for me to consider or change in my leadership role at MVNU?

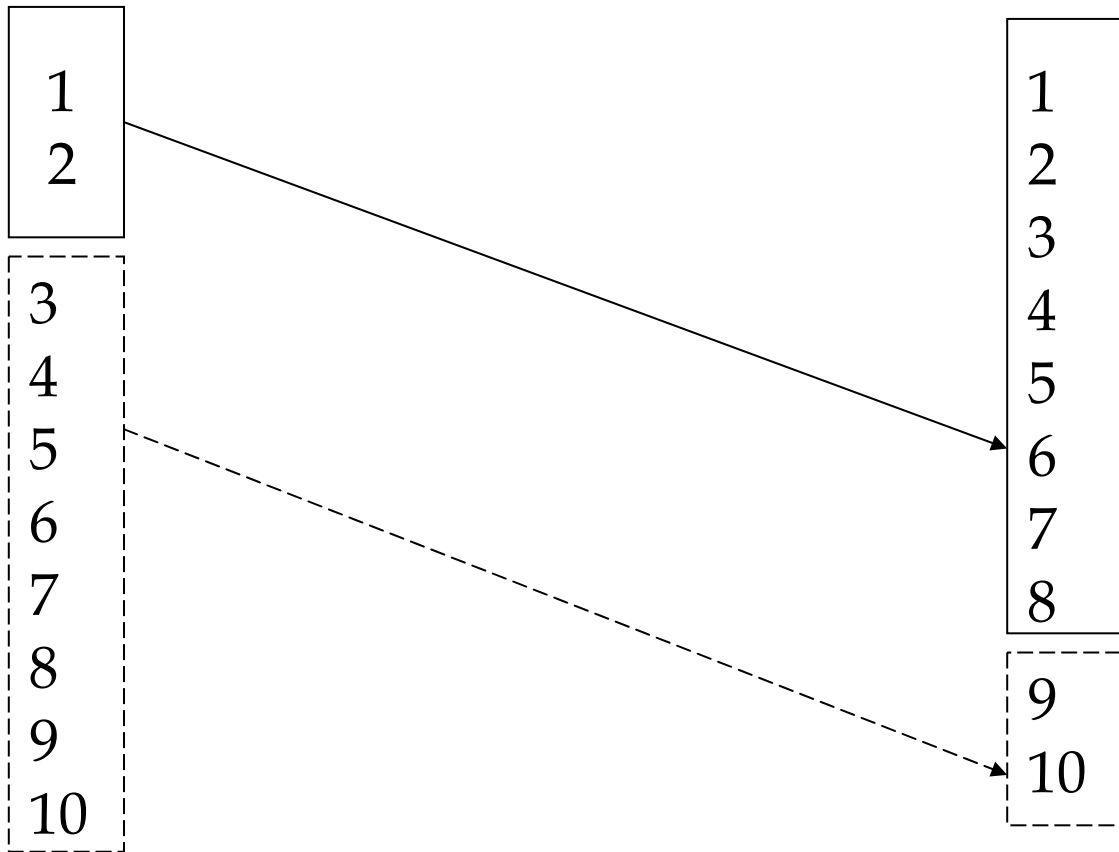
Mentoring agendas differ vastly according to need, purpose, time, money and personnel. However, the more structured the plan or strategy, the better chance there is for sustained growth of the mentored. Be proactive; not reactive.

Remember the Pareto Principle from *Developing the Leader Within You* by John Maxwell

TWENTY PERCENT OF YOUR PRIORITIES WILL GIVE YOU  
EIGHTY PERCENT OF YOUR PRODUCTION,  
IF  
YOU SPEND YOUR  
TIME, ENERGY, MONEY, AND PERSONNEL  
ON THE TOP 20 PERCENT OF YOUR PRIORITIES.

**PRIORITIES**

**PRODUCTION**



## APPLYING THE PARETO PRINCIPLE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>PHONE CALLS TO MAKE</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>COMPLETED</b></span></p> <p>1. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>PERSONAL NOTES</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>COMPLETED</b></span></p> <p>1. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4. _____ <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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### 20/80 TIME

ORDER OF PRIORITY	TIME ALLOWED	DESCRIPTION LIST OF THINGS TO DO NOW HIGH IMPORTANCE, HIGH URGENCY	COMPLETED
1.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.		_____	<input type="checkbox"/>



**LIST OF THINGS TO DO**  
High Importance; Low Urgency

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

**LIST OF THINGS TO DELEGATE**  
Low Importance; High Urgency

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Mentoring Role of the Pastor/Teacher and the Church or other Governing Board**

Recently, I conducted a local church Board two-day planning retreat. What a blessing for me! The retreat format was built around six “Characteristics of Strong and Effective Board Members.” Upon completing the retreat, a board member shared with the group that “we have had a year of follow-through as a board outlined for us this weekend.” It dawned on me in that retreat setting the mentoring role a leader has in relation to his/her governing board.

The six characteristics of strong and effective boards are:

1. Board members articulate the church’s mission, vision and values;
2. Board members understand the role, purpose and function and structure of the board;
3. Board members relate to the pastor and the congregation with one voice;
4. Board members communicate with each other Christianly (Ephesians 4:2), compassionately, respectfully, directly, and supportively;
5. Board members listen to congregational members and friends, appreciate the heritage of their faith community, and model faith development and spiritual formation to the congregation; and
6. Board members develop new leaders for increasing responsibilities throughout the congregation.

How would you modify this list with additions or deletions to make these “characteristics” a mentoring outline to guide you as you work with your board?

### **If You Are the Person Being Mentored...**

Often we shift roles in the mentoring process. We mentor some individuals, and we are mentored by others in other contexts.

I have several advisory councils with whom I meet on a regular basis. Recently I asked a group of twenty pastors from our region these questions:

- What are you hearing (about MVNU) that I need to hear?
- What are you thinking or dreaming about MVNU?
- What are your concerns about this institution?
- What new ideas would you like for me (or the campus leadership team) to consider?
- What are the key issues facing your congregation today?
- Since we face many of those same issues with students, how can we better work together to address these issues and concerns?

To another group I asked:

- Is MVNU fundamentally the same school that it was when it was started in 1968? Is it the same place that founding president Stephen Nease spoke of in a letter to his mother, “We are having the time of our lives...convinced that we enjoy one of the rare opportunities ever found in the church.”?
- Are faculty, staff and administrators working with the same sense of passion and purpose?
- Am I the same president as when I moved to Mount Vernon in 1989?
- Is “calling” to our specific assignment on campus still a word in our vocabularies and a conviction and reality in our hearts?
- When was the last time we had a “burning bush” experience on campus?

Your “accountability group” or advisory group will differ from mine; so will your questions. However, as leaders, it’s important for us to switch hats at appropriate times and be mentored by others. We are better and stronger leaders because we ask and listen.

**Proverbs 27:6**

**The kisses of an enemy may be profuse,  
but faithful are the wounds of a friend.**

## **“The Power of Three (or More)” - Working Together in the Body of Christ**

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fail, and one falls, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help...two will withstand...a three-fold cord is not quickly broken.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

A few years ago, I had the privilege of speaking to a group of Church of the Nazarene educators in Johannesburg, South Africa. The setting was the first Consultation on Global Faculty Development for the denomination. Nazarene educators spent a week together probing the possibilities of an Academy for International Education in the Church of the Nazarene. My part in the conference program was to lead two sessions on the subject of institutional collaboration. The title of my presentation was “Institutional Collaboration as Academy Strategy.” I addressed the need for intra- and inter-institutional strategy as foundational for the denomination to “maximize access” to the rich resources of the educational institutions of the Church of the Nazarene worldwide, particularly in the two-thirds world.

It was a wonderful experience for me. I met many friends from around the world. However, something happened to me while I was there. My purpose was to assist other educators. Instead, I found myself asking some hard questions about my leadership character at MVNU and the degree to which I model the partnership and collaboration I “preached.” I was asking probing questions about my personal integrity. Was the strategic process I thought I was championing at MVNU falling on deaf ears? If so, why?

I returned to the MVNU campus determined to share with the faculty and staff my “moment of truth,” to outline some specific steps for us to take together and to request for the campus community to hold me accountable to my word. If “trust is the foundation of effective leadership” (Weens), then I must be the change I seek to produce in the MVNU faculty and staff before institutional collaboration is to become a way of life on our campus.

Let me summarize what I said to the educators in Johannesburg, and then identify some questions I asked the MVNU faculty and staff about our relationships.

I re-emphasized to the conference participants that “leadership rises up at the intersection of personal passion and public need.” I suggested that every organization needs a “champion” for the collaborative process, if partnering or collaborating is to become a way of life for an institution, and not just an intellectual game. I presented some lessons learned at MVNU about collaboration.

- \* Using collaboration to manage change is challenging.
- \* A vision and need are required for success.
- \* Regular communication is the glue of collaboration.
- \* Active, committed leadership at the senior administrative level and an informed and broad-based steering committee are required.
- \* The greater the trust and communication, the faster and more profound is the benefit.
- \* Institutional collaboration must become institutional strategy.

Using Winer's model, I asked the participants to evaluate their institutions regarding the following factors with ratings of high, medium, or low:

1. Environment  
History and leadership?  
Favorable climate?
2. Membership  
Trust?  
In member's self interest?  
Able to compromise?
3. Structure  
Flexible?  
Clear Roles and Guidelines?
4. Communication  
Open and frequent?  
Established links?
5. Purpose  
Attainable Goals?  
Shared vision?
6. Resources  
Sufficient Funds?  
Sufficient Time?  
Skilled Facilitator?

Before I completed the presentation, I made some remarks using quotes I had included for them in a booklet I had distributed. But as I was speaking to THEM, I found myself speaking to myself about MVNU. I sincerely wanted to increase the level of involvement and trust between the administration and the campus community of employees. The power of three (or more) as affirmed in Ecclesiastes is a powerful image and necessary concept for an institution or church seeking to embrace collaboration as strategy.

Indeed, institutional collaboration must become institutional strategy. This is my passion. But it will not happen simply by the leader making pronouncements. It will happen if we passionately believe with Helen Keller that "alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

More specifically, I returned to MVNU and shared with the campus community the following commitments:

1. I want to affirm each of you as brothers and sisters in Christ whom I choose work at MVNU as a vocational calling.

2. With this affirmation will come a renewed emphasis on continued training and development. The staff development committee is being restructured and will provide ongoing staff development throughout the year.
3. I will work closely with a task force specifically and with the campus community during the next eighteen months to streamline the administrative and decision making structures. The goal is to facilitate, not inhibit, you in accomplishing your vocational assignments and realizing your ministry goals at MVNU. "None of us is as smart as all of us."
4. I ask for your assistance in revising the document, FOR THIS WE STAND: VALUES UNDERLYING THE MVNU FAITH COMMUNITY. I wrote this document in 1993 with your feedback when I realized that MVNU was enrolling an increasing number of students with no previous connection to MVNU or understanding to the sponsoring denomination of the institution. I again need your counsel. I need you to work with me in revising this important document.
5. The MVNU vision statement needs revising. I shared with the MVNU Board of Trustees recently that I needed to revise the present MVNU vision statement.
6. A task force has been working to revise the MVNU master campus development plan in light of enrollment growth projections for the next twenty years and the recent acquisition of the Pinecrest farm property across Martinsburg Road. The campus now consists of 401 acres. You will have another opportunity to review the several scenarios developed by the task force and our consultants before recommendations are forwarded to the Board of Trustees for consideration.
7. A Board appointed task force is studying the issue of university status for MVNU. The MVNU faculty and staff will have an opportunity to discuss the information and the tentative recommendations already forwarded to you.
8. I want to find ways to periodically update the campus community regarding our progress in developing an operating budget proposal for the Board of Trustees. I believe you trust us, but I think the budget planning committee can do a more effective job in communicating with you the process, progress, problems, and potential regarding the budget building experience.

I shared with the campus community the proverb of the Kikuyu people of Africa that states:

**“WHEN ELEPHANTS FIGHT, IT IS THE GRASS THAT  
SUFFERS.”**

The proverb means that when the people in power (the leaders) fight, it is the “grass-roots” people who get hurt. I seek to empower and support the faculty and staff. Yet, I

wonder if the structure presently in place facilitates or inhibits the “grass roots” of this institution from working and relating at their peak potential.

I concluded my remarks to the faculty and staff by stating, “In a new and profound way since my Johannesburg experience, to a degree I don’t think has characterized me in the past, I want to understand, embrace, and lead the academic faith community at MVNU from the perspective reflected in the eight commitments outlined above.”

Integrity. Character. Vulnerability. Community. Courage. Conviction. Gratitude. Hope. Trust. These words shape a leader who seeks to lead from a Christian value base. Have I succeeded in all that was outlined above to the MVNU faculty and staff? No! Interestingly, more was accomplished than one might expect. The issue, however, is not so much a “checklist” of accomplishments as it is the growth of the leader in both competence and character. And the growth of the led!

Since the event on campus when I presented the above material to the faculty and staff, I have continued to think about the broader theme of leadership character, particularly as the imperative relates to leading an academic community of faith in the midst of diverse personalities, conflicting expectations, differing faith traditions, distinct assignments and various levels of maturity. Leadership character becomes the issue. Character counts—big time!

Leadership character is the connection between “The Power of Three (or more)” and institutional collaboration. For institutional collaboration to become institutional strategy in an academic faith community, a spirituality of leadership must be forged and embraced. I seek to lead and learn from this perspective and commitment. “May it be so, Lord, for me and the people with whom I serve.”

### **Summary and key questions of “Twelve Theses for Kingdom Servanthood in Post Communist Europe” by Peter Kuzmic<sup>18</sup>**

Peter Kuzmic’s “Twelve Theses on Kingdom Servanthood for Post Communist Europe” gives us cause to think. Following the summary are key questions to use as a starting point for prayer and personal reflection.

1. Servants of the King know, love and obey their Lord above everyone and everything else.

*The true nature and mission of the church is to be marked by humble service and a recognition that we can claim no ownership of the things and people that belong to God along. We are called to be his humble servants always ready to obey his command and to do his will. The kingdom demands commitment and obedience in service.*

- Explain why you agree or disagree with Kuzmic’s statement that “Jesus (Christ) is Lord” becomes the equivalent of the acknowledgement of Christ’s kingship and the point of entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3)?

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<sup>18</sup> Dr. Peter Kuzmic is a Croatian who serves as president of the Croatian Theological Seminary and a distinguished Professor of World Missions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

- Kuzmic says that we are called to be Christ's "humble servants, always ready to obey his command and to do his will." How do we die unto ourselves and become humble servants?
- "Our concern is not reacting left or right. Our concern is affirmation based on full fledged biblical theology." What does the author mean by these statements?

2. Servants of the King are neither totally at home nor fully comfortable in any kingdoms of this world.

*The church is to serve the world but not to be a servant of the world. Our authority in the world is grounded in our identity in our Lord. Faithfulness to God must always be given priority over loyalty to our nation.*

- How do Christian disciples "serve the world, but not...be a servant of the world"?
- How shall we challenge the authorities and engage in dialogue with the intelligentsia as well as with the hierarchies of the national churches as servants of Christ the Lord?
- What ways can we manifest the biblical concept of shalom? Do you agree that shalom includes well-ordered relationships, justice, stability, and material well-being?

3. Servants of the King are seekers of the kingdom and not empire-builders.

*Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and then all these things will be given to you as well."*

- What are some ways that we may live out the words of Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and then everything will be added unto you"?
- How can we check ourselves to know if we are kingdom seeking or empire-building?
- What fruit will be evident in our lives if we are kingdom seeking?

4. Servants of the King excel in righteousness and practice a prophetic spirituality.

*The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities.*

- Do we seek to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist?
- Are we spreading the righteousness of Christ in our world? How comfortable does this make us?
- Is our salvation transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities?

5. Servants of the King are indifferent to worldly gain and recognition.



*All of us have to fight against the spirit of the age, the spirit of greed, and the spirit of personal promotion. Agape love for humans must overcome idolatrous worship of things.*

6. Servants of the King are disciplined people, striving for excellence in all areas of life.

*Leaders are to be life-long learners, a translation of disciples. For those of us in Christian education, we must seek academic excellence. The kingdom of God stands against all mediocrity and contentment with the status quo. The attitudes that should mark a kingdom-learner are to be severe with self, gentle with others, and honest with all.*

- How does a Christian demonstrate a life of “self-denial”?
- Do we stand against mediocrity and contentment with the status quo?  
How do we do that graciously?
- Are we “severe with self; gentle with others; honest with all”?

7. Servants of the King refuse to divorce theory and practice (word and deed).

*So work and deed must be held together, proclamation and loving service, evangelism and social responsibility, sacred and secular.*

- How often do we interpret God’s Word but fail to be transforming agents of his Word?
- How can we consistently be the transforming agents that God desires?
- Do others see us as doing what we say we believe?

8. Servants of the King are not religious tourists but engaged citizens of God’s kingdom among the kingdoms of this world.

*Withdrawal and disengagement are not part of the kingdom of God’s citizens’ vocabulary.*

- Are we behaving in such a manner that serves God and his people?
- What can we do that will bring lasting fruit for the kingdom?
- How can we engage leadership to develop and maintain a practice of spiritual engagement?

9. Servants of the King have a comprehensive vision.

*This requires that we promote peace and be the agents of reconciliation; that we monitor human rights and speak for truth, justice and minorities. Unless we do these things, we may save souls but lose minds.*

- How does the statement, “The King is not our private Lord” make you feel? Why?
- According to Kuzmic, we need to develop a non-secrearian ecclesiology and an evangelical base for socio-political ethics, seek the welfare of society, promote peace, be agents of reconciliation, monitor human rights, and speak for truth, justice, and minorities. How do we do these things?

- Is it God's calling for us to do these things? How do we do these things and not be overwhelmed?

#### 10. Servants of the King are concerned for the unity of all God's people.

*We as servant leaders need to continually ask ourselves the painful question: "How can a sinful and divided church announce to the world the gospel of salvation and reconciliation?" That will practically mean less independence and more interdependence; less competition and more cooperation to move from competing to complimenting; less ambition to lead and more willingness to follow and serve; less of a drive to dominate and more of ability and willingness to develop - a primary task of us teachers; less of a need to control and more of willingness to contribute and facilitate; less self-serving power and more empowerment of others; less to talk and more to listen; less empire-building and more kingdom seeking; be better stewards of resources and avoid the sinful waste and duplication in evidence everywhere.*

- How do we tackle the problem of the evangelical family, being dysfunctional, fragmented, and having too much in-fighting?
- Kuzmic says less independence, less competition, less ambition, less drive to dominate, less of a need to control, less self-seeking and self-serving power, less talk, less empire-building, and less wastefulness is needed. How do we as individuals and we as the church tackle this list?
- How do we encourage, lead, or invigorate others with the vision of God's people working together on these issues?

#### 11. Servants of the King are holy people, people of prayer and praise, full of the Holy Spirit.

*We are to be dependent and grateful; thirsty and filled; liberated and joyful; and marked by holiness, humility and a simple life-style.*

- Because of Jesus we have freedom, joy, and celebration. Do we act like that? Do others recognize Him in our life?
- Is our lifestyle marked by dependency upon Christ as well as gratefulness, joy, holiness, and a simple life-style?
- How can we cultivate more gratefulness and holiness in our lives?

#### 12. Servants of the King have a memory and a hope.

*We must constantly look back to the foundation laid by Christ and his apostles, for we have a memory to keep. We are the people of the Book and we must look forward for we are the people of hope, fully cognizant of the fact that we obediently strive and serve on behalf of the kingdom of God. We cannot bring it in; He will come to both complete and judge.*

- We are commissioned to preach the good news to all nations. Are we doing that?
- Kuzmic states that as leaders, the primary qualification is to remain servants. What does remaining a servant as you are leading mean to you?

- Why is it important to focus on Christ and His resurrection as well as the future when He returns?

### **Conclusion**

**In Theme Three, PURPOSE, we looked closely at mentoring those we lead, collaboration, and Kingdom Servanthood. We recognize the Body of Christ is our focus as servant leaders. In Theme Four we turn to the PLAN portion of dealing with the Body of Christ. We will learn how to facilitate the spiritual transformation of self and congregation. Again, we are focusing on the Body of Christ, the people of God.**

# *Theme Five*

**THE PAIN  
OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS  
EXPERIENCED IN THE TENSION  
BETWEEN GOOD AND GODLY  
PEOPLE ...OVER VISION  
AND VALUES.**

## *Theme Five*

### **THEME FIVE: THE PAIN OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS EXPERIENCED IN THE TENSION BETWEEN CONFLICTING VISION AND VALUES.**

*“Christian leaders convictionally believe that good and godly people can and do experience clear and intense differences.”* E. LeBron Fairbanks

#### **OVERVIEW OF THEME STRUCTURE**

- Introduction: make no little plans
- Moving from vision to action
- The Elusiveness of contentment
- Christian love in confusing times

#### **Introduction: Make No Little Plans**

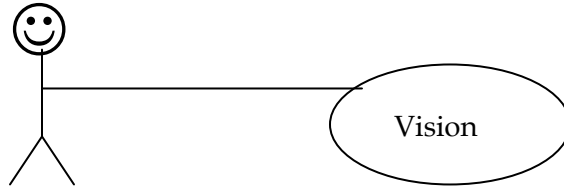
Periodically, I return to a quote from Teddy Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, for encouragement, perspective and comfort. Reflect on these words:

*“It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have been better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly...who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never known neither victory or defeat.”*

Sometimes the visionary leaders experience the “pain of leadership” when a vision of the future is not accepted or grasped by those for whom the leader is responsible, individuals, it seems to the leader, who often prefer the status quo. Much prayer and the Spirit of God empowering the leader will give the visionary courage, strength and comfort as he/she guides a congregation and a ministry group through necessary (and sometimes painful) transitions.

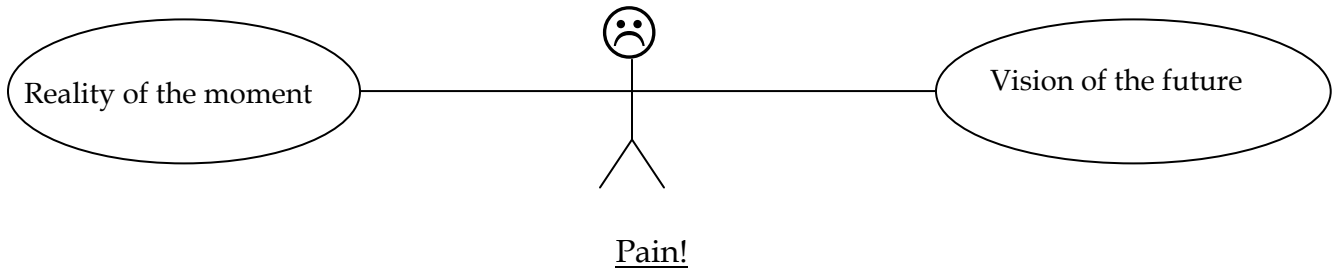
In mentoring and teaching emerging leaders we often focus on the joy of leadership and not the pain in leadership. It is true that individuals in leadership positions have the potential to influence change and impact people. This is rewarding and we are energized. A vision captures us. Growth and expansion will result. Surely it is right. Everyone will agree! We will move ahead. The world is changed. And we are grateful!

We don't talk as much about the pain in leadership. This pain can be illustrated by me standing with outstretched arms. In one hand, I hold tenaciously to the vision I believe God has given me for my assignment and responsibility. I believe it is the right action to take, policy to adopt, direction to pursue or goal to adopt.

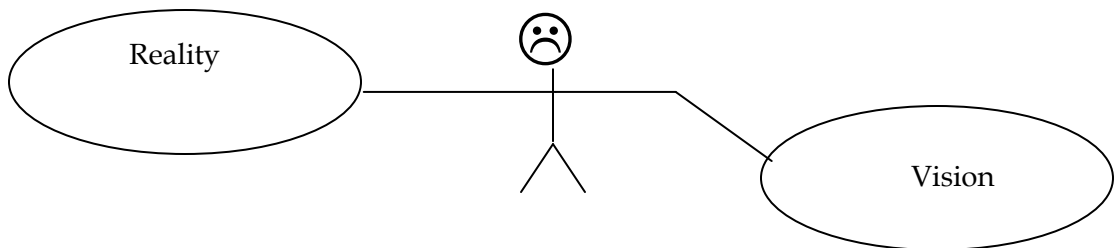


However, from the other extended arm is a hand firmly holding to “reality” – the situation or context in which I work, the circumstances (finances/facilities) which seem to dictate what can and cannot be done, or the people or followers who must embrace the vision if what is dreamed is to move from vision to action. And we are stunned when those with whom we work reject the vision that is cast or challenge the vision as it is presented.

The tension in holding on to our vision and to the reality of the present situation often produces pain.



If we relax one arm and let go of the vision, we drift along with no direction.



It is in holding, intentionally, to both vision and reality that the possibility exists for leaders to move from vision to action and with this intentionality comes both joy and pain for the leader.

Why? Sooner rather than later, Christian leaders are jolted when we experience this reality:

- good and godly people often differ on how to reach mutually desired goals; and sometimes,
- these good and godly people COLLIDE ... and a faith community is divided, the kingdom of God suffers and satan laughs.
- this is the pain in leadership. Intense pain!

I have come to see that these collisions occur, not necessarily because of good or bad ideas, noble or sinful goals, or right or wrong solutions. Rather, good and godly people most often collide over VISION and VALUES in the faith community. And we are caught in the middle of a divided group of Christians over where we should be going (vision) and how we are going to get there (values).

And in the midst of these painful situations we ask ourselves, as leaders, these probing questions:

- Is it possible, in these situations, to live and work together as Christians so that our relationships are redemptive and a witness to unbelievers of the reconciling work of God in Christ?
- If “in Christ, all things are made new,” then how does our relationship with Christ inform and guide us in the way we lead in these painful encounters?
- In the midst of these conflicting situations and irreconcilable expectations placed on us, what does it mean, really mean, to lead a divided faith community with the mind of Christ?

### **Moving from Vision to Action**

It has been through wrestling with these questions that I have learned about the leadership qualities needed to guide a faith community. And I continue to learn about the movement from a vision of the leader to action by the entire faith community, particularly in times of conflict and collision.

In light of these realities, I want to share with you six “anchors” to hold us steady as faithful Christian leaders as we grasp firmly to our vision and, at the same time, seek to move the church, university, region or denomination to action.

**Anchor # 1:**                    **“Speak Gracefully”**  
**Issue:**                        **“Watch the words.”**  
**Principle:**                 **Words we speak can bless or “destroy” people.**

- “What comes out of my mouth reflects what is in my heart” so Jesus states in the Gospels.
- As leaders we either:
  - Encourage or discourage those with whom we work.
  - Uplift or put them down.
  - Speak positively or negatively about them.
  - Reflect cultural sensitivity or cultural “blindness” to them.
  - Focus on the other person, or focus on self.
- I often ask myself: how do others feel when they leave my presence?
  - Stronger or weaker?
  - Larger or smaller about themselves?
  - Confident or “scared”?
  - Understood or misunderstood?
  - Affirmed or manipulated?
  - Blessed or “destroyed”?

Henri Nouwen once stated:

- *“When the door of the steam bath is continually left open, the heat inside rapidly escapes through it.”* (he is referring to the problem with individuals who talk constantly.)
- *“The praise to criticism ratio with others with whom we work should be at about 80-90% praise or positive statements to 10-20% criticism or negative statements.”* Good advice from Sven Walroos, Scandinavian clinical psychologist.
- According to Ephesians 4:25, God uses the words we speak to others within the Body of Christ to extend His grace through us to them! What a powerful and probing thought!
- Remember, the words we speak to those with whom we work especially those who differ and even collide with us, can bless them or destroy them. Choose to bless them!

**Anchor #1:** *“Speak Gracefully”*  
**Anchor # 2:** *“Live Gratefully”*  
**Issue:** **Comparison is the root of inferiority.**  
**Principle:** *“Don’t whine -- be grateful.”*

- Comparison is so pervasive in our society – in the workforce, the family, the local church or region, in our communities and particularly within ourselves.
- We can feel good about ourselves – our gifts, talents and abilities – until we compare ourselves with the gifts, talents and abilities of other people.
- We can believe our co-workers are adequate for the jobs we give to them until we compare their work – creativity, innovation, energy, collegiality – with others.
- Comparison can eat us alive ... And rob us of joy, relationships, confidence and peace, and in the process, sap our energy and drain us of enthusiasm.
- Comparison can transform us from being a delightful “boss,” supervisor, or pastor into a preoccupied, dejected, negative and disgruntled individual that other people only endure.
- What is the antidote to comparison? Three profound biblical qualities:
  - *Gratitude!*
  - *Thankfulness!*
  - *Appreciation!*
- We can choose to accept the people and provisions God in His wisdom has given to us.
- We can choose to work to bring out the best in others through seeing the best in them.
- In every situation, we can choose to be grateful, believing that God is in the midst of all that we are doing (I. Thessalonians 5:18).
- Gratitude is the “life-giving” antidote to the negative impact of comparison.
- Remember: Don’t whine over what you don’t have; be grateful – in all things – for what God has provided. Cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

**Anchor #1 & 2:** *“Speak Gracefully”*  
*“Live Gratefully”*



**Anchor # 3:** "Listen Intently"  
**Issue:** "Seek first to understand."  
**Principle:** Understanding, not agreement, is the key to conflict management.

- Believe that "good and godly" people can have honest and intense differences.
- I can tell you, after 25 years in higher education administration that *good and godly people sometimes collide over vision and values.* And you have similar testimonies!
- This is why I have come to see that theological vision (what I believe about people / what I "see" in them) precedes organizational vision. (What I want for the church, university, region or denomination.) God give me your eyes to really "see" the people with whom I work.
- In conflict situations with good and godly people, I have learned to ask two growth producing questions:
  - "What can I learn? How can I change?"
- Likewise, I have learned at least two growth inhibiting questions:
  - "Why me? What if...?"

As a leader I may be a good administrator, however, I must be a great listener. I can listen for understanding. And listen for what is said. Also, I need to listen for what is not said. Listening to the people with whom I work values them. They deserve to be heard. They may have spiritual gifts needed to move the vision to action. Remember, understanding not agreement, is the key to conflict management.

**Anchor #1, 2, 3:** "Speak Gracefully"  
 "Live Gratefully"  
 "Listen Intently"

**Anchor # 4:** "Forgive Freely"  
**Issue:** "Be proactive in extending forgiveness."  
**Principle:** A spirit of forgiveness transforms and empowers leaders.

- One of my profound life lessons is this: forgiveness has little to do with the external environment around me, and everything to do with my "internal" condition!
- **Remember this:** extending forgiveness does not wait for the "other" to request forgiveness.
  - Example: Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."
  - Was Jesus naïve? Did he really believe that those who were killing him did not know what they were doing? No!
  - Did Jesus believe that by extending forgiveness, those who were slandering him and hurting him would cease their activity? No!
  - Jesus was not going to permit what others said against him or the evil they did against him to create a bitterness or resentment within him and thereby create a rupture on the relationship with God His Father. It simply was not worth it!
    - "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!"
- Extending forgiveness frees me from bondage to the other person.
- Too often, we permit persons who have offended us to control us.

- “Great leaders,” “we are told,” are shaped in the most challenging and difficult times.”
- Remember, a spirit of forgiveness transforms and empowers leaders.

**Remember the first four Anchors:**

**“Speak Gracefully”**  
**“Live Gratefully”**  
**“Listen Intently”**  
**“Forgive Freely”**

**Anchor # 5:**                   **“Lead Decisively”**  
**Issue:**                       **“Be decisive - avoid paralysis.”**  
**Principle:**               **We seldom “enjoy” the luxury of having all the information we need before making necessary decisions.**

Perhaps you have heard it said that “one person’s dream is another person’s nightmare!” Yet, it is in this context that we live, work and lead.

- It is in the tension between our vision for the future and the reality of the present that our decision making as leaders most often takes place.
- As leaders we constantly move between two needs: the need for long range and strategic planning for our assignments and the daily routine of budgets, personnel, facility management and interpersonal conflicts.
- Sometimes this balancing act is between macro-managing (strategy focused on the big picture) and micro-managing (staying focused on the small implementation details of our assignments).
- I have often told the people with whom I work that I want to be a leader of faith and vision. But I don’t want to cross the line to be an irresponsible leader. Yet who determines where the “line” really is between faith and irresponsibility.
- I don’t want to think I have to choose between biblical commands (i.e., “go ye....and make disciples”) and people needs (i.e., salary increases, equipment needs, and travel expenses). But sometimes I do, and must.
- By now, you have heard me speak of the critical importance of RESPECT for our brothers and sisters with whom we labor as we pursue the biblical mandate to “Go...and make disciples...”
  - You have heard me discuss “respect” for our co-workers through:
    - the words we speak,
    - expressing gratitude for them,
    - listening to them intently, and
    - forgiving freely.
  - In fact, respecting our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those with whom we differ – even collide with us – is at the heart of what it means to Lead with the Mind of Christ.
  - However, at some point in our leadership roles, decisions have to be made. As I say this, we must remember that the real issue is not, “must a decision be made.” Rather the question is how, within the community, are the decisions made and implemented.
- Especially in times of conflict over vision, decisions will need to be made – even when continuing differences exist! And, in these times, we will lead – lead decisively – but from our knees and often with a weeping heart!

- We must avoid paralysis – waiting until everyone agrees with us – when decisions need and must be made.
- We seldom “enjoy” the luxury of having all the information we need, before making necessary decisions. Sometimes, perhaps often, we must move ahead without everyone within the community agreeing with the vision or direction to be taken.
- How do we move ahead, decisively, in these painful situations while, at the same time, show Christian respect to those who differ with us?
  - We move ahead -- decisively – through
    - Prayer, with them, for them and for “me” as leader;
    - Collaboration, involving them when and where we can in the process.
    - Gratitude, thanking God, and “them” for their gifts, talents, abilities and testimony of faith in Jesus as Lord;
  - In this spirit of humility and brokenness, we move ahead:
    - Confidently – believing that God is working in the needs of this difficult situation, and,
    - Decisively, not with paralysis or uncertainty, but with the conviction that God has spoken his word of vision and direction, and that He will continue to lead His people to action even though the circumstances or attitudes may give evidence of His work at the present time.
- This is leading with the mind of Christ – leading decisively in the midst of complex and difficult situations.
- To lead decisively with Christian humility demands that we continue to nurture and develop:
  - Listening and communicating skills,
  - Timing and processing skills,
  - Affirming and encouraging skills,
  - Asking and Inquiring skills and
  - “Gift” discernment and delegation skills.

The more I know about Christian leadership, the more I realize there is to know. I am a committed lifelong learner and student of what it means to lead decisively with the mind of Christ.

- Remember, avoid paralysis in decision-making. We seldom “enjoy” the luxury of having all the information we need before making necessary decisions. Be decisive with humility.

Let’s review the five anchors discussed thus far to hold us steady as we lead from vision to action. They are:

Speak Gracefully  
Live Gratefully  
Listen Intently  
Forgive Freely, and  
Lead Decisively

**The final anchor is this:**      “Love Deeply”  
**Issue:**                              “Value people, not power.” (or position)  
**Principle:**                         The evidence of leadership is seen in the lives of the followers.

- As leaders, you and I must keep remembering the many things we have in common with our colleagues and values we have in common. Focus on the things that unite us, not divide us.
- I often ask myself: Are MVNU employees stronger in their faith, more confident in themselves and more fulfilled in their work as a result of working at MVNU? Do I express appropriate appreciation, thanks and gratitude to MVNU faculty, staff and students?
- Over the years, I have tried to remember to trust my best moments when making decisions regarding employees. "Let your gentleness be known to all." (Phil. 4:4-7).
- As leaders we must be passionate about communicating our personal and professional (institutional) vision, mission and values to those with whom we work or for whom we are responsible.
  - Lead the way and encourage others for whom you are responsible, to memorize the strategic vision of the faith community you lead.
  - Talk often about the "overarching priorities of our group." Collectively focus on our core values.
- This is the bottom line: try to enlarge the vision of my people about the work they are doing. I want them to see the big picture. I must assist them in discovering how they, in their particular assignments, fit into the grand scheme and purpose of the institution or region. I want faculty, staff and students to feel good about working at MVNU! I truly seek to value people and progress, not power and position.
- Remember: the evidence of leadership is seen in the lives of the followers. We must never forget that satan uses discontent and conflict within a faith community to create division and unrest within the fellowship. Stand in the midst of a divided community as a priestly/prophetic/pastoral voice - especially when good and godly people collide over vision and values.

Let me summarize these qualities that convict me at my worst and characterize me at my best. These "anchors" hold me steady as I seek to move the group for which I am responsible from vision to action.

I really want my words to be grace-giving, life-generating and inspiring to others and not discouraging, depressing and draining utterances.

I really want to be known as a person who is forever grateful, regardless of the situation, believing that God is in the midst of everything I do and is working to bring good in every situation.

I really want to listen to and respect the people with whom I work, to understand them - and for them to understand me - even if we do not agree with each other.

I really want to initiate forgiveness when I have been offended because I don't have the energy or strength to carry the heavy burden and guilt of an unforgiving spirit.

I really want to lead decisively even as I experience the pain of holding tenaciously to the vision while acknowledging the realities of my situation.

I really want my relationship with others to energize them, to have a positive impact on their lives and to enable them, in some small way, to grow – become stronger – in their faith, their confidence in themselves and their competence at work as a result of our interaction in the home and on the job and with me as their leader.

And, I urge every one of you to yearn to increasingly be a Christian leader in whatever work assignment He gives to you. Discover your own answers – inspired by God’s word and His Holy Spirit to this probing question, “If ‘In Christ all things are made new,’ then how does my relationship with Christ transform and convert the way I lead?”

Three fundamental convictions about Christian leadership in a faith community have risen within me as a result of wrestling with these issues, questions and leadership qualities. Convictions about:

4. who we are as people of God;
5. what we are called to do in the work of God; and
6. how we live together as the family of God.

Jim Collins, in his book Good to Great talks about the critical characteristics of the leaders. He speaks of humility and fierce resolve as essential for Level 5 or top leaders. I believe that whatever else you discover in Christian leaders you will find that they:

1. Speak Gracefully. They watch the words they speak.
2. Live Gratefully. They don’t whine, are grateful.
3. Listen Intently. They seek first to understand.
4. Forgive Freely. They are proactive in extending forgiveness.
5. Lead Decisively. They avoid paralysis in decision-making with humility.
6. Love Deeply. They value people, not power.

Which one of these “anchors” do you need most right now in your leadership assignment? As you experience the tension between the vision God has given you and the reality of your present situation, in which of these areas do you most need God to hold you steady? As you move from vision to action, what is your greatest need:

1. Speaking Gracefully?
2. Living Gratefully?
3. Listening Intently?
4. Forgiving Freely?
5. Leading Decisively?
6. Loving Deeply?

Be specific. Be personal. Be honest.

One more question. Which of these six anchors is your greatest strength? Again, be specific. Be personal. Be honest. It’s vitally important for us to affirm our strength even as we acknowledge our need. Build on your strength. Work on your need. Now join me in prayer for that specific anchor you need and give thanks for strength He has given to you as you lead your people from vision to action.

**Remember this question?**

**How can my ministry of  
Christian leadership enable  
others to fulfill their ministry  
to each other and mission in  
the world in the context of a  
dynamic laboratory of  
learning how to live together  
as God's children?**

**The Elusiveness of Contentment**

When conflicts within the fellowship and collisions occur, the temptation will be to give up and perhaps move on. On several occasions, I have even engaged in "pity parties" when I complain to God.

In one of these "feeling sorry for myself" times, I remembered a quote from Bill Gothard that was attached to our refrigerator for many years. "If we are not content with what we have, we will never be content with what we want."

But what does it mean to be content? And what is the nature of contentment?

Does it mean that Christians must be passive and accept as their duty to God and individuals - whatever lot "darts" and pain that comes their way? Is contentment the same as \_\_\_\_?

Does biblical contentment imply a lack of ambition, desire for advancement, or vision of increased leadership responsibilities in a new or old work assignment?

The gift of contentment to which Paul speaks is elusive but not impossible to experience, even in the tension of \_\_\_\_ tenaciously to a God given vision while at the time, grasping firmly to the reality of the present situation. In the process, contentment as described by Paul will emerge as pivotal and transformative for you. It will hold us steady when we are tempted to run or simply walk away. It is elusive, but not impossible to experience.

Remember Gothards' statement: "If we are not content with what we have, we will never be content with what we want." Biblical contentment is elusive because of 1)the irony of contentment; 2)the barriers to contentment and the secret of contentment. Let me explain.

In painful situations for the leader within a faith community, especially when we are upset with everyone else, Paul's guidance on contentment is particularly insightful to leaders.

### I. *The Irony of Contentment*

- The irony is this: We tend to think that we know what is best for our lives, and we ask God for it (and if God grants our prayers, we will be content!) The text reminds us that God can give us inward peace in whatever situation He places us!
- Paul wrote these words on contentment while in prison. The previous two years he had been in another prison near Jerusalem, insulted by the Roman governor of the area, shipwrecked on his way to Rome, without food for fourteen days, and then placed in jail when he arrived in Rome! And these seemingly disastrous experiences follow his great teaching and preaching and his three missionary journeys as recorded in the book of Acts.
- But did Paul moan? Complain? Whine? Blame others for his predicament? Engage in a "pity party?"
- This is fascinating. In Rome, while in prison, he did not focus on what he could do if he had more resources, were in another location, if he worked for a different boss, or had Christian co-workers. He did not focus on "why?", "why me?" or "what if?"
- Instead, while in chains in prison in Rome, Paul wrote what we know as the Prison Epistles - Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon! He "bloomed" where he was planted! - And, according to Philippians 4:7, God gave to Paul contentment and an inner peace. It's amazingly ironic how tomorrow takes care of itself when we give our best to the workplace and ministry God has given to us today.
- You may not work at the place you prefer, earn the money you desire to earn, have the governing Board you desire or the parishioners you believe you need --- but in these very situations, ironically, as difficult, unfair, and challenging as they may seem and be, you can experience a contentment which defies understanding.

**Remember: "If we are not content with what we have; we will never be content with what we want.**

Biblical contentment is illusive because of the irony of contentment. God's ways are not our ways.

Contentment is elusive, secondly because of:

### II. *The Barriers to Contentment*

- One of the greatest barriers to biblical contentment is comparison. Comparison is the enemy of contentment. Comparison is pervasive - in our education institutions, positions at work, regarding the money we earn, the places we live, even the cars we drive. We can be grateful and thankful for the gifts God has given to us . . . until we compare our gifts from God to His gifts to others! Too often we express in thought, word or deed, "I may have more than you, but I don't have as much as another!"
- Paul starts at a different point: "I know what it means to be in need . . . or to have plenty; to be well fed or hungry. And he challenges us to do the same and to affirm the appropriate parallels in our lives."

- Comparison, I have come to realize, is the root of inferiority. I can feel good about myself until I compare myself to another.

Remember: "If we are not content with what we have, we will never be content with what we want."

- Another barrier to contentment is our circumstances. Paul could have said, "Why am I in prison?" "Why didn't I listen to friends?" (His friends in the cities of Tyre and Caesarea begged Paul not to continue his journey to Jerusalem knowing that he would face persecution and prison).

You and I have these continual temptations:

- "If I had just listened to . . ."
- "Life is greener on the other side."
- "If I were there, I could . . ."
- "If I had this . . . or that . . ."

Paul's response to his friends in Acts 21:14, who begged Paul not to continue to Jerusalem was clear: "I will do God's will." And Paul proceeded to Jerusalem and he was at peace.

- Yet another barrier to contentment is people. In my twenty-five years of higher education administration, I have come to see that in any situation, there will be people, and with the people we work will be problems and possibilities. Will we focus on the problems? Or will we focus on the possibilities and potential?
- In the situation where Paul found himself, he witnessed to many in jail! He wrote letters to the young churches at Philippi, Ephesus, Colossae and to Philemon. Paul encourages us to focus on the possibilities of our circumstances and not exclusively or morbidly on our problems with the people with whom we live, worship, and work.

**Remember the quote: "If we are not content with what we have, we will never be content with what we want."**

- Biblical contentment is illusive because of the irony of contentment and the barriers to contentment.

Now, let me share with you:

### III. *The Secret of Contentment:*

Biblical contentment is elusiveness, but it is not impossible to experience. The secret of contentment is not grounded in the people who disappoint us, circumstances that distract us, or problems that overwhelm us. The secret of biblical contentment is grounded in gratitude.

Contentment is rooted in a focus on God and His mercy and grace, not in a preoccupation with people and problems. The foremost quality of a contented person is gratefulness. Let me paraphrase a familiar chorus:

Give thanks with a grateful heart; Give thanks to the Holy One;  
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.  
And now let the "discontented," say "I have peace,  
Let the dissatisfied say, "I have rest,"



Because of what the Lord has done for us.  
Give thanks.

*(Original words and music by Henry Smith, 1978)*

Listen again to Philippians 4:5-6. "Let your gentleness be evident to all. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your request to God." And what is the result? Paul tells us: "And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!"

- **Gratitude - thanksgiving - arises out of our acceptance that all of life is grace - as an underserved and unearned gift - a grace gift - from the Father's Hand.**
- This theocentric or God-centered character of gratitude is anchored in ruthless trust that there is a God who is sovereign and whose providential care guides His People.

I am slowly coming to see, very slowly, that contentment does not make us grateful. Rather it is gratitude that makes us contented. When things go wrong, when people disappoint us, when our colleagues don't understand us, and when it appears that irreconcilable differences exists within the faith community between good and godly people, we can choose to believe in the sovereignty of God. In the midst of inner unrest, we can choose to believe in His watchful care over our lives in the midst of doubts, questions, conflicts, and persecution.

In these sometimes humanly miserable situations,

We can choose to believe that  
In His time, In His time,  
He makes all things beautiful,  
In His time.

Lord, please show me everyday  
As your teaching me your way,  
that you do just what you say,  
In your time!

Often, this is a convictional affirmation, based alone in radical trust in a Sovereign God. When emotions and circumstances do not suggest this affirmation of faith, we can choose to believe in the Holy God of grace and mercy to see us through.

- We often quote by memory Paul's great statement in Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." It is a great verse to remind us to be strong and take courage because our faith is in Christ . . . not ourselves or others.
- But this great verse is given to us by Paul in the context of his discussion of contentment: I can do all things, whether in need and hungry, or with plenty and well fed--- **In either set of circumstances---** I can do everything God wants me to do through Christ who gives me strength.
- Whatever the circumstance, or conditions, and regardless of the people - their attitudes and their treatment of us, be grateful for the Christ who dwells within you and me and gives us contentment in the midst of these difficult situations and circumstances.

- Be grateful – thankful – that, in the midst of stress, pressure, and perhaps misunderstanding, God is teaching us things about ourselves, others, life, faith and trust, that we would not – could not – have learned **without** these experiences!

Contentment is grounded in a heart filled with gratitude. Even in prison, the Triune God was still in control of Paul's life. Gratitude, for Paul, was not conditioned in good circumstances, understanding employees, pleasant co-workers or that great salary. Rather his gratitude was rooted in a ruthless TRUST in the Sovereign God of Grace and Mercy.

- Paul challenges us to “give thanks with a grateful heart” – he teaches us that gratitude is not grounded in murmuring, grumbling, fault-finding, or complaining. Rather the secret of contentment – for Paul, and for us – is in the conviction that God is big enough to handle any situation we encounter.

## Christian Hope in Confusing Times

Napoleon Bonaparte is reported to have said, “Leaders are dealers in hope.” For the Christian leader, this is especially true in situations within a faith community when good and godly people have clear and distinct differences over vision and values.

Months before the 2001-02 school year began, I was scheduled to speak on September 12, 2001, to MVNU students in a chapel service. The events of September 11 shook us to the core on campus, as it did to many around the world. I will never forget praying with students, staff, faculty and their families as they came to the MVNU R.R. Hodges Chapel/Auditorium throughout the afternoon of September 11. At 6:00 p.m., the chaplain and his staff led the campus community in a meaningful service of prayer and reflection.

My sermon theme for the Wednesday morning, September 12, chapel service changed radically. With much prayer and not much sleep, I spoke to our campus family on the subject, “Why Do Good People Suffer?” The text for the sermon was the Old Testament book of Habakkuk. All of us, it seemed, were asking questions and seeking answers regarding the problem of evil and human suffering.

Habakkuk, you may remember, was an Old Testament prophet who was deeply distressed by the apparent injustice that prevailed in the world. He attempted to reconcile the evil of his day to the goodness and the righteous character of God.

As a prophet of God, he was concerned with the suffering of his people.

- \* Were they not the chosen of God?
- \* Why would God use a heathen nation to chastise His own people?

Habakkuk reminded God that they were not so bad as the Chaldeans whom God was using to humiliate or chasten Judah, the children of God. In the midst of Habakkuk's complaining to God, (in chapter 1), he breaks forth in the midst of his search for answers with this startling affirmation (in chapter 2): “The just shall live by his faith.”

When God told Habakkuk that Babylon would conquer Israel, the prophet felt that this was not just. Without hesitation, he asks God why He would allow a heathen and cruel nation to oppress His people? Habakkuk concludes his power-packed, three-chapter book not only with the great affirmation that “the just shall live by his faith,” but with these words near the close of chapter 3:

Habakkuk 3:17-19

“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines,  
 Though the olive crops fail and the fields produce no food  
 Though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,  
Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

Fairbanks’ translation of these verses:

When God appears silent, when there is no apparent evidence that  
 God heard or even understood the situation, when all that I’ve worked for seems lost.

In these moments, we choose to believe radically in a God who is faithful and true;  
 we stake our lives on His promise to never leave us nor forsake us;  
 and we pray “We don’t know what to do, but we are looking to you.”

Our faith, in these moments, is not based on feelings, but on the conviction that God is sovereign, and will bring good out of every situation in which we find ourselves. God dealt with Habakkuk patiently until he could see that Babylon was being used by God to discipline Israel and that Babylon itself would also face the judgment of God.

The providence of God does not mean that disappointment and trouble will not come. It does mean that NOTHING, NOT EVEN THE GREATEST TRAGEDY, THE BITTEREST PERSECUTION, THE WORST MISFORTUNE, OR DEATH OF THE BODY CAN DO ANY PERMANENT HARM OR SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD !

This confidence in the faithfulness of God is available only through God’s enabling grace as described in this chorus:

*“Grace alone which God supplies,  
 Strength unknown He does provide,  
 Christ in us our cornerstone,  
 We will go forth in grace alone”.*

The words to this chorus remind me of a profound experience during the summer of 2001.

Anne and I celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in June 2002 on a summer weekend in New York City. Each day we were in the Big Apple, we walked around “Ground Zero.” We were overwhelmed by the huge number of pictures, cards, tributes, letters and prayers attached to anything and everything around the perimeter. We paused and read many of the tributes, letters, cards and prayers.

In the midst of such grief and tragedy, I found myself singing over and over again the chorus of the old hymn:

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
 All other ground is sinking sand.  
 All other ground is sinking sand.*

Verse two of the song, written in 1834, seemed especially appropriate on this occasion in 2002:

*When darkness seems to hide His face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.*

As Christians, our hope is in Christ! By grace alone, we convictionally affirm this hope in the midst of the suffering from economic deprivation, vast social disparity, political dictatorship or the hideous work of terrorists.

Our hope as Christians is in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. **The center of the Christian gospel is the reconciliation of all creation to God through Jesus Christ.** The old gospel song has it right, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through." We are to live in the world but not of the world.

As Christians, our hope is not for this life only, it is for life eternal with the Triune God. The question we face as followers of Jesus Christ is: Are we living faithfully as members of the "community of the King," with Kingdom "eyes," ruthless trust and a radical hope?

Anne, Stephen and I lived in Manila, the Philippines, prior to moving in 1989 to Mount Vernon. At the time, the average per capital income was \$700 a year. We worshipped with beautiful Filipino Christians whose joy was contagious. Their church facilities were simple. Their homes were modest. Some of our closest friends lived in what we in America would call "shanties." Many traveled to the market each day for food because of no refrigeration in their homes.

Yet, these Christians were joyful because their hope was not in their government, their job or their income. Their hope was in Jesus Christ for their salvation and for their comfort. They truly believed that, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through."

Hope in Christ does not mean we will avoid or be able to ignore suffering. We know that hope born of faith is nurtured and purified through pain, suffering and difficulty. The basis of our hope, however, has to do with the One who is stronger than the suffering we encounter.

The people of Israel repeatedly reflected on their history and discerned God's guiding hand in the many painful events. **Memory reminds us of the faithfulness of God in the hard times and in the joyful moments.** Without memory, there is no expectation.

With expectation, we experience the minutes, hours and days of our life differently. Christian hope is not dependent on peace in the land or justice in the world.

A chorus we sing often in MVNU chapel services includes these words:

My life is in You, Lord  
My strength is in You, Lord  
My hope is in You, Lord  
In You, it's in You

I will praise You with all of my life  
 I will praise You with all of my strength  
     With all of my life  
     With all of my strength  
     All of my hope is in You

My life is in You, Lord  
 My strength is in You, Lord  
 My hope is in You, Lord  
 In You, it's in You

Hope is willing to leave some questions unanswered. Hope makes you see God's guiding hand not only in the gentle and pleasant moments but also in the shadows of disappointment and darkness.

Why? Because we believe!! In a memorial chapel service at MVNU on September 11, 2002, we sang this chorus:

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE  
*We believe in God the Father,  
 We believe in Christ, the Son;  
 We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
 We are the church and we stand as one.*

*We believe in the Holy Bible,  
 We believe in the virgin birth.  
 We believe in the resurrection,  
 That Christ one day will return to earth.*

*We believe in the blood of Jesus,  
 We believe in eternal life;  
 We believe in His blood that frees us  
 To become the Bride of Christ.*

(Chorus)  
*Holy, holy, holy is our God;  
 Worthy, worthy, worthy is our King!  
 All glory and honor are His to receive;  
 To Jesus we sing because we believe.*

And because "we believe," we offer our lives to Christ as a living sacrifice. Listen to the words we often sing.

I OFFER MY LIFE  
*All that I have, all that I am,  
 I lay them down before You, O, Lord.  
 All my regrets, all my acclaim;  
 The joy and the pain, I'm making them Yours.*

(Chorus)  
*Lord, I offer my life to You--  
 Everything I've been through,*

*Use it for Your glory.*

*Lord, I offer my days to You,  
Lifting my praise to You  
As a pleasing sacrifice.  
Lord, I offer You my life.*

*Things in the past, things yet unseen,  
Wishes and dreams that are yet to come true.  
All of my hopes, all of my plans,  
My heart and my hands are lifted to You.*

What can we give that You have not given?  
And what do we have that is not already Yours?  
All we possess are these lives we're living  
And that's what we give to You, Lord.

(Chorus)

Lord, I offer my life to You--  
Everything I've been through,  
Use it for Your glory,

May these words speak grace, peace and hope to us as we reflect upon the leadership “hope” of reconciliation and transformation – individually and collectively – especially in difficult and confusing times!

Leaders are dealers in hope. Servant leaders radiate Christian hope in confusing and conflicting times in a community of faith.

## CONCLUSION

We don't often talk about the pain of leadership, but it is real, nevertheless. Good and godly people experience clear and intense differences. And we are called to faithfully serve in the midst of these conflicts, even when the differences between visions and values appear irreconcilable.

Habakkuk and Paul provide words of guidance for us. Be content. Live by your faith. “Let your gentleness be known to all.” Philippians 4:5.

Don't forget the “six anchors” when leading others in difficult times:

1. Speak Gracefully - watch the words you speak.
2. Live Gratefully - don't whine. Be grateful.
3. Listen Intently - seek first to understand.
4. forgive Freely - be proactive in lending forgiveness.
5. Lead Decisively - be decisive with humility.
6. Love Deeply - value people, not power.

Give thanks with a grateful heart. And radiate hope . . . even in the painful times!

# *Theme Six*

**THE EVIDENCE  
OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS  
REFLECTED IN THE QUALITATIVE  
GROWTH OF THE LED.**

## *Theme Six*

### **THEME SIX: THE EVIDENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS REFLECTED IN THE QUALITATIVE GROWTH OF THE LED.**

*“Leadership is known by the personalities it enriches, not by those it dominates or captivates. Leadership is not a process of exploitation of others for extraneous ends. It is a process of helping others to discover themselves in the achieving of aims which have become intrinsic to them. The proof of leading is in the qualitative growth of the led as individuals and as group members.”*

- Dr. Harold Reed, *Dynamics of Leadership*.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THEME STRUCTURE**

Introduction: Care Deeply: The Servant Leader Is Servant First

- Core Qualities of a Servant Leader
  1. Trust – “be the change we seek to produce”
  2. Brokenness – “...purifies our ambitions”
  3. Gratefulness – Cultivating a Spirit of Gratefulness
  4. Hospitality – “Making Room...the creation of free and friendly space...”
  5. Compassion – “seeing and affirming in others what they do not see in themselves”
  6. Endurance – Tenacity, Persistence, and Endurance
- Core Values of the Christian Servant Leader
- Core Attitudes of the Christian Servant Leader

#### **Introduction: Care Deeply: The Servant Leader Is Servant First**

“The servant leader is a servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least not be further deprived?” - Robert Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*.<sup>19</sup>

Theme Six, **Proof**, explores the rich relationship between the leader and the led, the Proof of effective leadership. Since the leader’s goal is to nurture the led, we will examine six qualities (Trust, Brokenness, Gratefulness, Hospitality, Compassion, and Endurance) that will assist the leader in pursuing his vocational mission of leading through serving. Stated differently, what values, goals and attitudes are necessary for a leader to bring out the best (prove) in those served and equip them to grow as persons, more likely themselves to become servants? With what tools and characteristics should the leader come prepared to accomplish the task of the servant leader? How can an individual lead in such a way that the persons

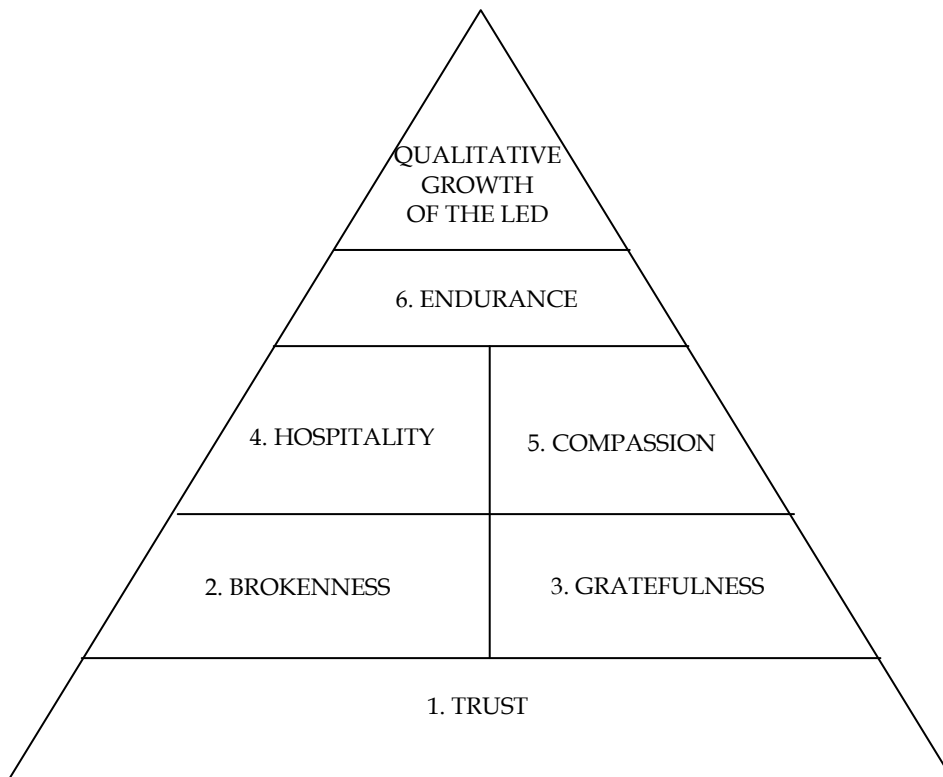
<sup>19</sup> Reed, Harold. *The Dynamics of Leadership: Open the Door to Your Leadership Potential*. Danville, IL: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1982.



served grow in the process of the leader and the led working together to accomplish agreed upon goals for the advancement of the Kingdom? Bringing out the best and growth are proofs of Christian leadership.

This section harkens back to Theme Two, **Power**. In Theme Two, we explored how the leader is a conduit of God's power, how the servant leader's power comes from God, and how humility with the led is the overall character the Christian servant leader should employ to be effective. In Theme Six, **Pain** we will go into detail on the characteristics the effective, servant leader needs to internalize to be effective.

### Core Qualities of a Servant Leader



The six core qualities shown above are the servant leader's foundation for effective leadership. Employing these six core qualities will lead to qualitative growth of the led, or the "Proof" of effective leadership. In the following six sections, we will explore how servant leaders have employed each of the six qualities. They represent the leader's toolkit for successful servant leadership. They are the toolkit to effectively implement the **B** portion of Figure 2.1 in Theme Two.

*We must be the change we seek to produce - Gandhi*

## 1. TRUST - The Foundation of Leadership in a Community of Faith

As shown in the triangle above, trust is the foundation on which we build. Trust is the fundamental first component or core quality of Christian Servant Leadership. Without trust, there would be no Christian Servant Leadership. Likewise, as Christians, our trust in God is fundamental to our beliefs. We trust God. We trust His Word. Trust is presented throughout the Bible as a fundamental characteristic of our relationship with God and Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:11, Paul writes, “the just shall live by faith”, and later in Ephesians 2:8 Paul said that it is by faith that we accept God’s grace. We trust God. Faith and trust are very closely related. Psalm 125:1 compares our trust in the Lord to Mount Zion, “which cannot be shaken but endures forever.”

As we all know from past experience from being both the leaders and the led, unless those we are to lead trust us, our effectiveness is doubtful as a Christian leader. The led will allow the leader time to build trust in the leader-led relationship, however over time if trust cannot be established, the leader’s effectiveness will decline. Furthermore as Christian leaders, we need to incorporate the Gandhi’s thoughts quoted above, namely that trust starts with us. Trust is a two-way street. For the led to trust the leader, the leader must trust the led. We must trust those we are leading.

To explore the concept of trust, I will borrow from the writing of Lovett H. Weems, Jr., President of Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri. First, I want to introduce the topic of Trust with an interesting story from Dr. Weems, then we will look at Trust’s three major components according to Dr. Weems: Relationships, Integrity, and Competence.

In an article written by Lovett H. Weems, he introduced the idea of Trust with the following story and brief introduction, used here with permission from Lovett Weems and Richard Leslie Parrott, Doctor of Ministry Program Director at Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio.

Seminary presidents spend much time raising money. Years ago I heard the statistic that large gifts tend to come after a dozen or so visits, often by the president. I was close to that statistical average with a woman in her nineties. She had ample resources, no family, close ties to the church, interest in our school, yet had never given a single gift. I scheduled yet another visit with her by scheduling a flight with a lengthy layover in her city so I could take her to dinner, as was our usual pattern.

When I arrived at her home, she was not dressed to go out. She indicated that she was not feeling well and perhaps we could visit for a few minutes then I could head back to the airport. We talked briefly in her living room. Then, as

we were standing near the door as I was leaving, she said simply, "I trust you." I knew then that we would receive a major gift. She left half of her estate to the seminary for student scholarships.

It became clear to me that people give out of trust and that trust grows out of relationships and experience that engender such trust.

When church leaders begin reading supposedly secular books about leadership, it is often a great surprise that the language used in the best of books seems to come from the vocabulary of the church. Church leaders may expect to find elaborate grids, schemes, and designs. Instead, the words that dominate have to do with values and character. It soon becomes quite evident that there is no way to talk about leadership without talking about values, meaning, character, and relationships.

A term sometimes used in communication theory is the "ethical proof" of the speaker. "Ethical proof" refers to the credibility that the hearers accord the speaker. When the ethical proof is high, the task of persuading the audience is not hard. When the ethical proof is neutral, the speaker has a more difficult time. When the ethical proof is extremely negative, the speaker has a very difficult time persuading the audience. This concept means that the way the constituents perceive the leader is probably much more important than the "facts" of the presentation.

So it is with the presence of trust and credibility between leaders and constituents. James Kouzes speaks of credibility as "credit-ability." People are doing an analysis of our credibility all the time just as a bank might assess our credit worthiness. Indeed, credibility is the working capital of the leader. It is the account of credibility that the leader draws to make possible creative change. Credibility is the foundation upon which all effective leadership builds.

A leader's trust is won very slowly, but it can be lost quickly. Once lost, this trust is very difficult to regain in that leadership setting. People may give us a leadership position through election or employment. However, the credibility needed to lead must be worked out among the people with whom we serve. It is trust from those with whom the leader works most closely that gives a leader the essential element of credibility.

Trust is constant part of our daily life. We trust the electricity to work when we turn on the switch; we trust traffic signals, the key to work, and on and on. Regarding relationships, our interaction with co-workers and family members is built on trust. Trust allows us to be productive, efficient. According to Lovett Weems, with low levels of trust, every interaction or exchange would have a "tax" imposed to make progress difficult. Our efficiency would grind to a halt. Collaboration and collaborative change would not occur.

Leading in non-trusting environments is very difficult. Leading to foster change in those environments is nearly impossible. So as Christian servant leaders, it is essential for us to foster trust in our relationships. Borrowing from Lovett Weems, trust has three components,

- Relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

### **Relationships**

Relationships feed trust, and trust allows relationships to expand. Trust and relationships grow together. Expanding one requires expanding the other. Deepening relationships requires deepened trust. Relationships were a critical success factor to St. Paul's success in the early stages of Christianity. He built on existing relationships. His experiences and writings show he built upon existing relationships to lead the church from afar. From Paul's letters we see how deeply he trusted the early Christians and how they must have trusted him.

In the context of being Christian servant leaders within our institutions, be they churches or schools, relationships precede plans and programs. Relationships are critical to successfully executed programs. Leaders may expect tacit acceptance of their leadership in the early stages of relationships, however the relationship must grow for the group's outcomes to be achieved, for planned programs to succeed. As Weems points out in his article, successful leadership is "a reciprocal relationship between those who choose to lead and those who decide to follow".

Lasting trust among those we lead comes from active, day-by-day interaction between the leader and the led, to explore and resolve active issues. That leader-led interaction requires the leader's presence. Thus, an active relationship is vital to build trust. That active presence and interaction between the leader and the led is communication. St. Paul traveled widely to personally visit with the growing church, then, when unable to travel or when an issue needed to be addressed more quickly than he could arrange personally to be on site, he wrote letters and sent emissaries.

Paul truly cared about those in the churches to whom he wrote. Likewise, our care of the led becomes vital for the led to continue investing in the relationship. Caring brings the relationship closer and trust strengthens the relationship. As Weems noted, our success as leaders goes beyond just caring. It achieves the same degree of caring that St. Paul had for the early Christians, it reaches the level of love.

Lovett Weems quotes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who said, "Whom you would change, you must first love." Secular writers make the same point in saying "just

possibly the best-kept secret of successful leaders is love” (Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 305).

So relationships are how trust is developed, and as leaders, we need to be actively engaged, day-by-day, in those relationships. Furthermore, as in the case of St. Paul, we need to take our caring to the level of love for those we lead.

## **Integrity**

Integrity builds trust by having honesty and consistency be a mandatory part of the leaders words and deeds. Just as faith and works go hand-in-hand and work together, the integrity of our words and actions are indicators of our integrity. Integrity builds trust. Integrity and trust are directly complementary. Increased integrity builds trust; the lack of integrity erodes trust. Note that integrity is not perfection. Rather it is consistency. The leader’s words and actions are consistent with each other, they work in concert, and they are complementary.

A story by Lovett Weems helps show how integrity is built by consistency between words and actions. I have had similar experiences, and I know you have too.

For a number of years, a United Methodist pastor served in Mississippi with great difficulty. He and his family moved regularly from one modest pastorate to another, sometimes after only one year. The reasons for the frequent moves were many. The educational, personal, and social differences between pastor and assigned congregations were gigantic. However, never far from the surface of parish conflict with their pastor was a profound witness by the pastor against the segregation and racism of the day.

When the United States Supreme Court rendered a decision in late 1969 that finally instituted unitary school systems across the South, this pastor was serving a white congregation in the Mississippi Delta where pronounced African-American population majorities were common. The pastor’s community was in a school district affected by the ruling. Within a matter of weeks, whites left the public school system with the exception of the pastor’s children.

A committee from the church made an appointment with the United Methodist bishop to talk about their pastoral appointment for the coming year. Bishops were

accustomed to meeting with delegations upset with this particular pastor. However, the bishop was surprised by the delegation's message. They said, "We don't agree or understand what our pastor and his family are doing. However, we respect his commitment to his beliefs. We understand, bishop that it may be best for our pastor's family to move. But, we want you to know that our request to you is that our pastor whom we respect be returned for another year."

In Psalm 25:21, David puts integrity right along his righteousness as his dual protectors. Jesus spoke about integrity when he told the parable of the master and the dishonest manager. Jesus warned us that being honest with a little is just as important as being honest with a lot. Furthermore, if we cannot be trusted with worldly wealth, how can we be trusted with "true riches" of God's kingdom? (Luke 16: 1-12). So, as we have heard for many years, we build our own reputation, both with those we lead and with God. For those we lead, we must maintain the highest integrity, or consistency between word and deed.

This section is about Proof, or the qualitative growth of the led. The format for leader-led interaction is relationships, relationships are where trust is built, and integrity (or consistent words and actions) help the leader build the trust of the led. For the proof of successful servant leadership to occur, the consistent example and power of integrity are required.

## Competence

Competence is the third component of trust. Speaking plainly, our followers look to us to be able to accomplish what needs to be done. If we consistently fall short, trust will dissolve. The leader must effectively address the group's current needs.

So trust occurs in and from relationships, and integrity (consistency between words and deeds) is vital to building trust, and competence (the ability to address the organization's needs) are necessities for building long-term trust. As leaders, we know that after an initial "honeymoon" period in any relationship, the led expect the leaders to meet expectations in competence to get the job done. In the religious arena, this expectation takes on additional weight. As Jackson W. Carroll points out in *Mainline to the Future* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2000, p. 8, italics added), a study of very large congregations found that their pastoral leaders "establish their authority or right to lead not primarily by virtue of the office they hold or because of their formal credentials, but more by a combination of demonstrated competence and religious authenticity." Thus, competence and integrity work together.

A common misconception is for competence to be mistaken for brilliance on the part of the leader. Brilliance or intelligence are not synonymous with competence.

Rather, the sought after skill is listening, analysis, and action to conclusion. It is to hear, to understand, then leading the group to appropriate action. Whether we are aware or not, the led will hold us accountable to address the need. Our ability to successfully address the need is a reflection of our competence. Although we can address the need on our own so the leader does all the work; that is not the recommended method. Being competent is helping the group work through the task to successful conclusion. It is not the leader's ability to single-handedly accomplish the task, rather the ability to understand the task and assure it is completed, many times by the group. In a Christian institutional setting, the leader's competence is demonstrated by the ability to achieve objectives using a collaborative approach so the led accomplish the task.

Another aspect of competence is the ability to stay focused. If achieving the task collaboratively is desirable, then the leader's job is to keep the group focused on the task until successfully accomplished. Doing so is competence. This focus must be coupled with appropriate action and a working knowledge of the task at hand. Competence requires the leader to become familiar with the task at hand, even if the leader does not personally perform the work. Competence is listening and focused action. Competence requires work on the part of the leader.

However, to become leadership, trust needs another ingredient, Vision or Inspiration. Vision and inspiration are the propellant, the engine of trust to cause it be leadership. Otherwise, without vision or inspiration, the trusted person becomes a gate keeper or a competent manager or administrator, not a leader.

## **Trust, Vision, and Leadership**

But Trust alone does not make leadership, especially Christian leadership. Reflecting back on a basic tenet of this project, how does the life of Christ change how we carry out our roles as leaders? The answer is vision. Just as Christ's leadership coupled a strong vision with trust to be a strong leader, like Him, the successful Christian servant leader must couple vision to trust. Without vision, the leader becomes a manager of the status quo. With vision and trust, the leader moves the led forward. Vision with passion and commitment inspire the people being led. Vision transforms inanimate trust into a living, effective leadership. The New Testament shows repeatedly how Jesus Christ continually portrayed vision passionately to inspire his followers. Christ worked tirelessly at this. By His example, we see that being a leader requires vision and passion, and they are conveyed by energy. Vision and inspiration require work. Vision with passion, commitment, and dedication inspire the led to achieve beyond what they anticipated.

However, we must keep in mind what we learned in Theme Four, PLAN. There, we learned being a leader is work. Among the many responsibilities of the leader, maintaining the balance between trust and vision is one the Christian leader must tirelessly maintain. The leader with trust and no vision administers or maintains the

status quo. The leader with vision and no trust will have a short tenure as leader since the leader needs the led. A leader abandoned by the led is no longer leading.

The example of Jesus as an inspirational leader with a vision is an interesting example and role model when attempting to develop servant leadership qualities and characteristics. Jesus passionately declared a singular vision to a heterogeneous community at the crossroads of the Mediterranean world. His vision was a radical departure from the conventional wisdom of the Jewish faith and its various groups as well as the Roman culture. Yet, with inspired vision that reached beyond the world known to his followers, He was able to be the ultimate leader, the ultimate servant and the ultimate leader.

Following the example of Jesus, the vision to transform trust into leadership need not be complex. Repeatedly, Jesus' disciples and apostles communicated a simple vision to the new church: Accept Jesus into your heart to be saved. In the case of our being the servant leader, our vision should be equally simple and straightforward. The vision should be short and very easy for anyone among the led to explain.

Vision brings trust alive. Vision is the propellant of trust. Likewise, trust is the harness of vision. Vision passionately pursued can exceed the bounds placed on it by trust, the trust earned from integrity and competence and developed in relationships. Vision can become its own master. We have all seen examples of this happening where the vision exceeds the bounds placed on it by the trust of the led. Jesus speaks directly to this risk in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), especially verse 5, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth". No leader is exempt from the accountability of his flock. This is especially true for the servant leader. The leader's drive and vision must never exceed the trust placed on the leader by the led such that the trust is expendable in favor of achieving the vision.

## **2. BROKENNESS : "...purifies our ambitions"**

"For you, O God, have tested us. You refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net. You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads. We went through fire and through water, but you brought us out to rich fulfillment." - Psalm 66:10-12

Brokenness is the second core quality on which servant leadership is built. The relationship between brokenness and leadership in the real world of the local church or in a Christian college often presents conflicting expectations and multiple demands for the leader. In these situations, how do you lead Christianly, consistently, and with vision and courage? In these ministry assignments, how can you lead when you feel abused, manipulated, undermined, and ignored? And if God has permitted words to be spoken or deeds done against you, why? What does He want to teach you...and me? What does He want to teach



others? What are the relationship between pastoral leadership and the brokenness of spirit we often experience in these situations?

Listen to Wesley's Covenant Prayer he often used at the beginning of each new year.

I am no longer my own, but Yours.  
 Put me to what You will,  
 Rank me with whom You will.  
 Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
 Let me be employed by You or laid aside for You.  
 Exalted for You or brought low by You.  
 Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
 I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal.  
 And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
 You are mine, and I am Yours.  
 So be it.  
 And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
 Let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

What in John Wesley's prayer did you hear? Did you hear the words "Suffering...laid aside for you...brought low by you... have nothing... disposal..." Those are the descriptors of a broken heart.

What is the relationship between brokenness (as described by Wesley) and Christ-like or servant leadership? How can one effectively lead from the posture of "a wounded healer" as Nouwen would put it? How should one lead "with a broken heart"? How can the servant leader hope for the desired results of qualitative change among the led, the Proof of leadership, "with a broken heart"?

### **What is brokenness?**

Brokenness is one of those things that is easier to recognize when it is experienced, but often difficult to describe. Brokenness varies in degrees from uncomfortable to seemingly unbearable emotional pain. Sometimes God uses it when He needs to get our attention, wherever we happen to be in our walk with Him. Such was the case with Job and his trials.

Sometimes things happen that are outside of our control. God does not cause the circumstances, however He allows them to happen. God can use our brokenness to draw us closer to Him. He uses brokenness brought on by others to draw us closer to Himself. Listen to Psalms 51:16-17 - "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. These, O God, You will not despise." God's process of helping us develop character involves being broken before Him.

“For this reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.” - I Peter 1:5-9.

In the book, *Broken in the Right Place: How God Tames the Soul*<sup>20</sup>, makes some powerful statements regarding brokenness:

“Brokenness purifies our ambitions.”

“Brokenness allows us to see our own blind spots.”

“We cast stones at others,” he says, “out of our blind spots.”

“The breaking process produces a leader that can be trusted.”

He quotes Paul Cho, “I’ve yet to see a leader God has used tremendously who has not been broken.”

The following questions assist us as we respond to these attitude checks for brokenness.

Am I willing to let go of my dreams and ambitions if such is God’s will?

Am I defensive when accused, criticized, or misunderstood?

Am I coveting what others have instead of waiting for heaven’s rewards?

Am I forgiving when offended, with or without apology?

Am I complaining or arguing out of un-surrendered rights?

Am I thinking of others first out of love?

Am I proudly appearing that I am always right or know all the answers?

Am I practicing the spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, solitude, simplicity, etc.)?

Am I being silent regarding self-promotion and letting God do my public relations?

Am I daily saying, “God, whatever it takes, I’m willing to submit to Your leadership?”

Am I expressing joy in the difficulties, which serve to refine me?

Am I taking risks out of obedience to Christ instead of giving into fear, pride, or denial?

Remember, a leader who allows himself to go through the breaking process produces a leader that can be trusted.

### **What are the fruits of brokenness?**

No one wants to be broken. Why is it necessary for Christian leaders to be broken? The fruits of brokenness are humility, authenticity, integrity, and sensitivity. All of these qualities are desirable as a leader. Let’s focus more closely on the “fruit” of humility as a part of brokenness.

Humility is another word difficult to define but necessary if the leader is to be effective. Remember Ephesians 4:1-2: “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of

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<sup>20</sup> Nelson, Alan E. *Broken in the Right Place*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994..

the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love." Again in Proverbs 15:22: "Before honor is humility."

In biblical perspective, humility is a prerequisite to the things we seek most in our lives. Listen to these seven ways – very common ways – to spot a humble spirit.

Humility does not demand its own way.

Humility exudes an attitude of service (service is doing mundane things that help others).

Humility does not seek attention or credit.

Humility forgives when offended, but is hard to offend.

Humility does not criticize others.

Humility produces a teachable spirit.

Humility is gracious and thankful. In fact, one of the most Godlike attributes we can express is a gracious spirit – a spirit of mercy and thanksgiving.

Romans 12:21 states that "humble servants overcome evil with good." The paragraph heading for the great *kenosis* passage, Philippians 2:1-11, is "Imitating Christ's Humility." It reads:

*"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."*

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

### **How, then shall we respond to the brokenness in our lives?**

We can respond in one of two ways to the brokenness in our lives. We can resent the situation, person, circumstance, or God, and grow bitter, become angry, and withdraw. Or, we can be driven to our knees to ask God what He wants to teach us through the brokenness or "dark night of the soul." We need to learn certain things about ourselves if we are to grow and mature in the faith and our calling. In turn, this will enhance our qualities as servant leaders so to enhance our ability to achieve our goal of qualitative change among the led, the Proof of servant leadership.

God often uses people who are different from us, people with whom we have problems, to teach us these lessons we need to know about ourselves. As strong as we think we are, we recognize how weak we really are, and how much we need our heavenly Father if we are to lead in the way He wants us to lead. Too often it seems that we are driven to our knees with the words of II Corinthians 12:9: "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

The words of this contemporary song remind us of the truth of this passage.

*His strength is perfect when our strength is gone,  
He'll carry us when we can't carry on,  
Raised in His power, the weak become strong,  
His strength is perfect, His strength is perfect.*

Therefore, we are to respond as Christian leaders...

- by yielding responsibility of the “led” to the Christ who indwells within us by His Spirit.
- by living in, through, and from the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, solitude, etc.
- by living a “grace”-filled life (a theology of grace).
- by focusing on our walk and relationship with Christ, and not on others and their expectations.
- by leading pastorally out of the pain and brokenness (not denying it).
- by acknowledging our weaknesses, and our total dependency upon the Christ who indwells within by His Spirit. He is the One who will empower, guide, and comfort the pastor and other leaders who seek to lead out of their brokenness.
- by expecting trials, temptations, misunderstandings, verbal abuse, rejection, and a sense of being “used” by some whom we are suppose to lead.
- by relating to those in the Christian fellowship who profess faith in Christ as brothers and sisters in Christ (even though evidence may not support their testimony).

Read again Wesley’s Covenant Prayer.

The prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi embodies the spirit of the broken leader of Psalm 66. Let me pray this prayer for you and for me as we seek to lead in ways that strengthen the faith in the led:

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console, To be understood as to understand, To be loved as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
  
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Questions:

1. How can you lead when you feel abused, ignored, manipulated?
2. Am I willing to see my brokenness?

3. Am I willing to bring my brokenness to God and allow Him to bring about transformation?
4. How will brokenness help me become a more effective servant leader?

### 3. GRATEFULNESS: “Cultivating a Spirit of Gratefulness”

I first heard the words to the chorus “Give Thanks” in 1989 when I attended the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Manila, Philippines. You may know the words.

*Give thanks with a grateful heart; Give thanks to the Holy One;  
Give thanks because He’s given Jesus Christ, His Son.  
And now let the weak say, “I am strong,” Let the poor say, “I am rich,”  
Because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks.<sup>21</sup>*

Five thousand delegates from 192 countries participated in the ten-day conference. At the time of the conference the Berlin Wall stood firm. The Central and Eastern Europe Soviet bloc remained in tact. Numerous African countries were involved in civil wars.

Yet, I heard testimonies of God’s grace from delegates from these and other countries where Christians were regularly persecuted. I was profoundly impacted. These believers accepted

I Thessalonians 5:18 as an imperative and a way of life for them. “Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

Two weeks later, July 27, 1989, to be exact, I was elected president of Mount Vernon Nazarene University. For several reasons, Anne and I hesitated to accept the call. We were fearful that we would forget some core values of the Filipino Christians. The Filipino Christians with whom we worked were such grateful people. **They prayed often for daily bread and were so free to express gratitude to God and to others for the numerous blessings (a word frequently used by Filipino Christians).** Anne and I did not want to return to the States and get caught up in the cynicism, sarcasm, materialism, negativism, and criticism that we felt was so pervasive in America at the time.

Eleven years later, the 2000 academic year was a wake up call for me. I began the year feeling as if I had been sucked into the very lifestyle and mindset that I detested eleven years earlier. It came to a head for me in October when I heard Brennan Manning during MVNU’s Estep Prayer Lecture Series.

Therefore, these words are deeply personal. In his chapel message, Manning asked, “Let’s say I interviewed ten people, asking each the question—‘Do you trust God?’ and each answered, ‘Yes, I trust God,’ but nine of the ten actually did NOT trust Him. How would I find out which one of the professing Christians was telling the truth?” He continued, “**I would videotape each of the ten lives for a month and then, after watching the videos, pass**

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<sup>21</sup> Words and Music by Henry Smith, 1978

**judgment using this criterion: the person with an abiding spirit of gratitude is the one who trusts God."**

The scriptures remind us that God desires a thankful people, a grateful people, not a murmuring, grumbling, faultfinding and complaining people. However, in our real world of living and leading within the Christian community, how can we recapture a spirit of gratitude as we work daily with problems, people, and the conflicting perspectives of those whom we serve?

Will we live as faithful disciples with consistently grateful hearts in the difficult situations we face and the multiple demands placed on us in present and future leadership assignments? I passionately desire that each of us have a renewed commitment to cultivate a spirit of gratefulness in our lives. But how can we recapture a spirit of gratitude as a way of living? Listen again to I Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

"TO WALK IN GRATITUDE AS A WAY OF LIVING...." This text reminds us, our gratitude must be: ATTENTIVE ("Give thanks...."), INCLUSIVE ("in all circumstances"), and GOD-CENTERED ("for this is God's will in Christ Jesus.").

Let's look more carefully at each one of these imperatives of gratefulness or gratitude, the third core quality upon which successful servant leadership is built. The three imperatives of gratitude: Attentive, Inclusive and God-Centered, are essential for a consistently **grateful** Christian, and therefore servant leader.

**OUR GRATITUDE MUST BE ATTENTIVE -- "Give thanks..."** - (I Thessalonians 5:18a). Do you recall the story in Luke 17 of the ten lepers cleansed by Jesus? Ten were cleansed, yet only one of the cleansed lepers returned to Jesus to thank him. Were the other nine not aware they had been cleaned?

Attentiveness to what God is doing enables us to "see" and "focus" through the "eyes of our eyes" – our spiritual eyes.

We look for the miracles and marvels of God in our lives—our equivalent to the crossing of the Red Sea, the pillar of fire by night, and the manna by day, the daily protections from our 'enemies', or the 'healing' of our leprosy! And with this attentiveness comes gratitude to Him who promised never to leave or forsake us! God really is for us!

When we are continually preoccupied with busyness, the tyranny of the urgent, and the incessant running to meet everyone's expectations, then our thoughts cannot be focused. In my own flurry of activities last fall, Manning caught my attention when he repeated, rather loudly, I recall, "Awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness...."

A Spirit-empowered attentiveness to God alerts us to the presence of God manifested in a piece of music, a bird, a daffodil, a kiss, an encouraging word from a friend, a thunderstorm, a newborn baby, a fresh blanket of snow, a full moon, a sunrise, a sunset or a rainbow.

There are gifts of God we often take for granted. What about the grace-gifts from individuals—people with whom we live, work, or worship—colleagues and friends on this

campus or in local churches? And what about our family members and fellow employees...or even employers? Are we attentive to the small and large gifts God gives us through people close to us! Or are we taking them for granted...always expecting more? In the South where Anne and I grew up, should you spend any time with the older Christians, you would not help but notice how often they say, "Thank you, Jesus."

To be aware and alert to the presence of God manifested in the predictability of a job or the unpredictability of the people with whom we live and work requires a spirit-empowered attentiveness to God.

From this perspective, the difficult people with whom we work (or will work!), the conflicting expectations placed on us, the multiple demands and the sheer exhaustion we experience can be placed in perspective. Through attentiveness to God's activities in our lives, the people around us and the place we work can be made a source of joy – abiding joy – in the midst of seemingly impossible situations. The Spirit of God within us enables us though attentiveness to 'give thanks.' Our gratitude must be attentive.

**OUR GRATITUDE MUST BE INCLUSIVE – "in all circumstances"** – (I Thessalonians 5:18b). Job asks, "If we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow, too?" Nouwen wrote in an article of the spiritual work of gratitude:

*"To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives – the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections – that requires hard spiritual work. Still, we are only grateful people when we can say thank you to all that has brought us to the present moment. As long as we keep dividing our lives between events and people we would like to remember and those we would rather forget, we cannot claim the fullness of our beings as a gift of God to be grateful for."*

Don't focus just on the circumstances you normally would call wonderful. God may use difficult circumstances in a wonderful way. So we thank Him in the difficult circumstances, also! Manning told the story of a grateful, old woman in an extended care hospital:

*"She had some kind of 'wasting' disease, her powers fading away over the march of the month. A student worker spoke to her on a coincidental visit. The student kept going back, drawn by the strange force of a woman's joy. Though she could no longer move her arms and legs, the elderly lady would say, "I'm just so happy I can move my neck." When she could no longer move her neck, she would say, "I'm just so glad I can hear and see." When the young student finally asked the old woman what would happen if she lost sound and sight, the gentle old lady said, "I'll just be so grateful that you come to visit.""*

Remember to be thankful, grateful, for all things, "including" the little things.

Jesus said, "...whosoever can be trusted with very little can be trusted with much..." (Luke 16:10). If you are grateful in small things, even in a small way, you will naturally express gratitude in great things. Don't forget the ten lepers. For whatever reason, nine of the ten cleansed lepers chose not to return to give thanks.

The discipline of giving thanks in all circumstances is so painful and difficult at times, especially when we have been hurt deeply. But I am learning to say, "Thank you God even in

these times for the lessons You are teaching me about myself, my relationship to you, and others." Nouwen speaks of an old priest who told him, "My whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted until I discovered that my interruptions were my work."

Our gratitude must be inclusive – the joy and the sorrow, the small blessings as well as the large gifts from God, the interruptions and the routine. "Give thanks in all circumstances...." (I Thessalonians 5:18b).

**LASTLY, OUR GRATITUDE MUST BE GOD-CENTERED -- "for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."** - (I Thessalonians 5:18c). The theocentric or God-centered character of gratitude is anchored in ruthless trust that there is a God who is Sovereign and whose providential care guides His people. By divine mercy, we have been given the unearned gift of salvation. We received this gift through no merit of our own. Our sins have been forgiven though the blood of Jesus Christ.

When we celebrate that we have received a gift we can never repay, we notify others with our faces and our actions. The tenor of our lives becomes one of humble and joyful thanksgiving. We rejoice in the gift. "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, his love is everlasting." (Psalms 107:1) "Now thanks be to God for His gift [of grace]." (II Corinthians 9:15)

I was recently moved by an MVNU faculty member whose testimony reflected these passages. She said, "**I am learning new ways to see life and work as a means to express gratitude to God for his grace, mercy, and faithfulness.**" New ways to see life and work! - *that* is gratefulness!

God has reminded me throughout this year that the foremost quality of a trusting disciple and a Christian leader is gratefulness. Gratitude arises from the acceptance of all of life as grace—as an undeserved and unearned gift—a grace gift—from the Father's hand. And God has reminded me that: **GRATITUDE IS GROUNDED IN A FOCUS ON GOD AND HIS MERCY AND GRACE, AND NOT IN A PREOCCUPATION WITH PEOPLE AND THEIR PROBLEMS.** I state this with conviction because the opposite of gratitude is, of course, ingratitude, and the antithesis of giving thanks is grumbling.

So grievous was the matter of ingratitude in the mind of a great church leader that he wrote a letter stating: "...that ingratitude is one of the most abominable of sins and that it should be detested." Why? "For it is a forgetting of the graces, benefits, and blessings received...[from our Creator and Lord.]" Remember ingratitude and negative attitudes were among the Israelites major problems and caused them to wander in the wilderness for forty years before entering the Promised Land. Grumblers are like a crew of vineyard workers who had labored from dawn to dusk and felt cheated when the latecomers received the same wage (Matthew 20:1- 16). Grumblers bellyache about the unfairness of life, the poverty of their resources, the insensitivity of their spouse or employer, the liberals, the conservatives, the hot weather, the cold weather, the rich, the poor, the inadequate administrator of a Christian university, and the incompetent pastor of the local church. Grumblers bellyache! Gratitude, however, is not grounded in murmuring, grumbling, fault-finding, or complaining, but in the conviction that God is big enough to handle any situation we encounter! Praise God!



I have come to see in a profound way that it is gratitude that makes us joyful, not the other way around. Too often we are not grateful to God because we are sad when things don't go our way. Slowly, very slowly but surely, I am coming to see that joy does not make us grateful. Rather it is gratitude that makes us joyful. "Give us inner eyes—spiritual eyes—to see and embrace this profound truth, O God!"

As a Christian leader, a servant leader, do you find it difficult to imagine that gratefulness can become the basic attitude of your life? This will only be possible when your gratefulness is Attentive ("Give thanks..."), Inclusive ("in all circumstances...") and God-Centered ("for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.").

The challenge for the servant leaders who desire to make a profound and qualitative difference (thus achieve the Proof of effective servant leadership) in the lives of the led is this: Give thanks to God in the midst of the most difficult situations for this is the foundation of a spiritual life needed to sustain you during the months and years ahead. Don't let the routines of life dull us to the surprises of God!

"Give thanks with a grateful heart; Give thanks to the Holy one; Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, His son. And now let the weak say, "I am strong," Let the poor say, "I am rich, " and let us all say, "I will be a consistently, grateful Christian, because of what the Lord has done for me. Give thanks!"

Questions:

1. How does gratefulness as servant leaders enhance our ministry?
2. How can we "give thanks" at all times?
3. Whom have I recently shown gratitude towards?

#### **4. Hospitality: "Making Room...the creation of free and friendly space..."**

During a recent Christmas season Anne and I spent a fascinating evening in Columbus with a former MVNU student and his girlfriend. We walked to a nearby restaurant to purchase some Chinese food. We ate the meal by candlelight while sitting on the floor in a circle. The meal was great. The three hour discussion was phenomenal. What a great blessing to Anne and me as well as to the other couple! Sharing our meal. Sharing our time. Sharing our journey. During the evening Anne and I experienced what the Bible refers to as hospitality.

This fourth core quality of the servant leader, Hospitality, was a way of life fundamental to Christian identity for seventeen hundred years of the Christian church. Christine Pohl convincingly documents this practice in her book, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality in Christian Tradition*.

I want to challenge you to embrace the rich concept of biblical hospitality, a hospitality that becomes part of the servant leader striving to achieve qualitative impact on those being led.

Hospitality has the potential of transforming relationships with those individuals with whom we live and work.

I have wrestled with the biblical and historic understanding of hospitality in the Christian tradition including its pain, limitations and the leadership implications. Here, I simply want to address the fundamental concept of spiritual hospitality.

Biblically and theologically, the term “hospitality” is not limited to receiving a stranger into our homes – although it surely includes this dimension. Fundamentally, it is a core attitude toward others, those we are leading. This hospitality can be expressed by a variety of behaviors. Hospitality, biblically understood, challenges us to relate to others as if we were relating to Christ Himself. “Hospitality” means primarily the “creation of free space” – making room, to use Pohl’s words, where the strange and the stranger can enter and become friends. It is being to others with whom you live and work, a “living witness of the risen Christ.” The gift of Christian hospitality is the opportunity we provide for the guest, the stranger, or the friend to find his or her own way, even in the context of differences of thought or behavior that may exist.

With this perspective, the attitude of hospitality helps us to make room or create space for those with whom we live and work. It often provides the opportunity for those individuals to enter into deeper contact with himself, or herself, with others, and with God. The result is often a healing relationship and the creation of a faith community.

Hospitality, seeks to offer friendship without binding the other, unity without artificiality, freedom without leaving the person alone, faith without cajoling or demeaning, and respect for individual differences. It is an art that more Christians need to cultivate. Let me share with you two insights into this fascinating challenge of “spiritual hospitality.” Keep in mind Theme Two, **Power**, and how, servant leaders, we are conduits of God’s power. Spiritual hospitality flows to and from Christ so as we exercise our servant leadership, we are keeping an open channel between ourselves (the leaders) and the led, and between ourselves and Christ. Hospitality goes in two directions from us to the led and Christ, and to us from the led and Christ.

**First, the gift of “spiritual hospitality” is a “love gift” to Christ.**

Colossians 3:17, 23-24 reminds us that our service to others is service to the Lord Christ. This concept is at the very core of servant leadership. In our efforts we can be hurt, misunderstood, and rejected or we can be appreciated, affirmed, and accepted. The response, however, does not dictate our action. We love because He first loved us. When Anne and I moved to Manila, Philippines, both of us were overwhelmed by the pervasiveness of poverty in the country. Anne shared her despair with a Filipino friend, a female dentist. Anne’s friend encouraged her to focus on the few she could help, not on the masses she could not. Anne took her advice and focused on some women in need around us. She bought glasses for one lady, new teeth for another, and for another she sponsored a beautician’s course and attended the graduation ceremony. Anne befriended these ladies and invited them often to our home. By serving those few, she was serving Christ.

“The mystery of hospitality is how often our small tasks are translated by grace into God’s great work.” Service to others through hospitality, biblically understood, is service to Christ. Consider the concluding words from Matthew 25. “The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.””

Our gifts of hospitality to others are not selective “spiritual gifts” given by God to only a few for use in the kingdom. Rather, our gifts of care and concern to others are practical expressions of our love for Christ. For sure, with the commitment to a lifestyle of “spiritual hospitality” come key questions to each of us:

- What can I do to be hospitable in my servant leadership? Where can I be hospitable?
- How will my attitude of hospitality impact the way I live, learn, and lead?
- How do I deal with my unfinished agenda for the day when I attempt to “create space” and make room for others and in so doing not accomplish what I think needs to get done?

These are real life questions with which we must grapple. Spiritual hospitality takes time, patience and understanding.

Henri Nouwen begins an article on compassion with an old Sufi story of a “watermelon hunter.”

*Once upon a time, there was a man who strayed from his own country into the world known as the Land of Fools. He soon saw a number of people fleeing in terror from a field where they had been trying to reap wheat. “There is a monster in that field,” they told him. He looked and saw that it was a watermelon.*

*He offered to kill the “monster” for them. When he had cut the melon from its stalk, he took a slice and began to eat it. To his amazement, the people became even more terrified of him than they had been of the melon. They drove him away with pitchforks crying, “He will kill us next, unless we get rid of him.”*

*It so happened that at another time another man also strayed into the Land of Fools, and the same thing started to happen to him. But, instead of offering to help them with the “monster,” he agreed with them that it must be dangerous and by tiptoeing away from it with them he gained their confidence. He spent a long time with them in their houses until he could teach them, little by little, the basic facts which would enable them not only to lose their fear of melons, but even to cultivate them themselves.<sup>22</sup>*

With which “hunter” do you most identify? The second hunter was the servant leader. By solidarity with the led, trying to understand their concerns and spending quality time with them, the second “hunter” made a profound difference in the lives of the people in the story. He made a qualitative change in the lives of the led. His Proof was how they dramatically changed their perspective on melons. **He “made room” and “created space” for these people who were different from him.** Remember, we serve Christ through “practicing hospitality.” In so doing, we assist others in their growth and maturity in Christ. Again, the gift of spiritual hospitality is a love gift to Christ.

**Secondly, the “gift of spiritual hospitality” is a love gift from Christ.**

The miracle of miracles is that we are blessed when we reach out to others. Christ turns our “gifts of hospitality” to others into “gifts” from Him to us. We find our Lord in the midst of

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<sup>22</sup> Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1970), p. 207ff., quoted by Sheldon B. Kopp, *If You Meet the Buddha on the Road, Kill Him!* (Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972), p.8.

our service to others. How often we experience God's abiding presence in the midst of our very ordinary expressions of "making room and creating space for those with whom we live and work."

Nouwen would define compassionate actions or spiritual hospitality—"being to others what Saint John was for his listeners and readers: A living witness of the risen Christ!" Something happens to us and in us as we reach out to others with gifts of hospitality. Thus, a qualitative change occurs in the servant leader as well as in the led. The grace of Christ flows to us and through us when we work, play and study with the mind of Christ!

Our tendency, however, is to hesitate because we feel our "gifts" are so insignificant. Brennan Manning told this applicable story about "The Cracked Pot."

*A water bearer in India had two large pots. Each hung on opposite ends of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other was perfect. The latter always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house. The cracked pot arrived only half-full. Every day for two full years, the water bearer delivered only one and a half pots of water.*

*The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, because it fulfilled magnificently the purpose for which it had been made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its imperfection, miserable that it was to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.*

*After the second year of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, the unhappy pot spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.*

*"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you," the pot said.*

*"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"*

*"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all this work and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.*

*The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion, he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the cracked pot took notice of the beautiful wildflowers on the side of the path, bright in the sun's glow, and the sight cheered it up a bit.*

*But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad that it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.*

*The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, not on the other pot's side? That is because I have always known about your flaw, and I have taken advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day, as we have walked back from the stream you have watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have had this beauty to grace his house."*

In our efforts at spiritual hospitality, do we sometimes feel like the "cracked pot?" Yes! Yes! Yes! But, God has a way of using our availability and our efforts toward others in ways we could never imagine. And in the process, He blesses us in ways we never dreamed possible!

Again, the gift of hospitality – this gift of creating space and making room for others – by grace alone, becomes a love gift from Christ to us. We grow and mature in our faith as we increasingly “practice hospitality.” Remember, the miracle of miracles is that we are blessed when we reach out to others in Jesus’ name.

Let me remind you that, fundamentally, hospitality in Christian perspective is much more than being nice and feeding friends. It is a way of life for believers and dictates how we approach those with whom we live, work, and serve. For the strangers, the disenfranchised and lonely, our family members and friends, creating space and making room for them – this is the essence of hospitality, biblically understood. Yet, we experience the “surprises of God” in our lives in the process of enabling others to grow and mature. Through “providing space” and “making room” for others to grow, we are given “space” by God to grow and mature in Christ-likeness.

Hospitality, biblically understood, is nothing less than the amazing grace of God working in us and through us! Let’s pursue this nearly forgotten practice in Christian tradition. Join me in seeking to discover the rich implications of “spiritual hospitality,” especially as it relates to those with whom we work (or will work!). May each of you increasingly become that jar of clay for others, and in the process be shaped and reshaped by the Potter’s hand.

Questions:

1. Am I willing to be hospitable to my “enemies”?
2. If hospitality brings about community, who do you place in the “poor section of town” in your mind?
3. How does the hospitality I receive from Christ make me a more effective servant leader?

## **5. Compassion: “Helping others to see what they have not seen in themselves.”**

The fifth core quality of the servant leader, Compassion is nearly synonymous with Caring in the context of qualities of the servant leader. Our compassion, or care, for others can be intimate or distant. What do we mean by “care”? The word “care” finds its root in the Celtic term “kara,” which means lament. The basic meaning of care is “to grieve, to experience sorrow, to cry out with.” I am struck by the background of the word “care” because we tend to look at caring of the strong toward the weak, of the powerful toward the powerless, of the “haves” toward the “have-nots.”

I am coming to understand that biblical compassion is not a skill which we acquire. Rather, it is a quality of the human heart which must be revealed.

The late Henri Nouwen often stated that you cannot get a Ph.D. in caring. Nouwen helped me to realize that when we see the other person and discover in that person gentleness, tenderness, and other beautiful gifts, which he or she is not able to see, then our compassionate heart is revealed!

What a profound thought! **Our compassionate heart is revealed as we enable others to see what they have not, nor cannot, see in themselves!** Again, we see the reciprocal, two-way part of servant leadership. As Christian servant leaders, we become conduits of God's caring or compassion. We are talking about caring relationships with people, the people we lead as servant leaders. The Proof of our leadership becomes enabling others to see what they have not seen. To be compassionate is not, first of all, something we do for others, but rather it is discovering with others their divinely given resources and inner qualities. It is a way of being present with others and standing with them in their times of need. I'm slowly coming to see that God wants us to be with others...not to prove that we are valuable to them.

When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand.

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion— who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing, and not doing— that is the friend who cares.

You may remember moments, as I do, in which we were called to be with a friend who had lost a brother, a sister, a wife or husband, child or parent. What can we say, do, or propose at such a moment? There is a strong inclination to say things such as, "Don't cry; the one you loved is in the hands of God." or "Don't be sad because there are so many good people and so many good things left worth living for." "Caring deeply" in these moments demands that...we listen intently, we speak directly and caringly, we ask questions for the other person's sake and not for our own, we are truly present, even in the quietness, and we pray honestly, openly, and confidently!

Nouwen introduced me to the phenomenal concept of voluntary displacement in his book entitled *Compassion*<sup>23</sup> and in other books and numerous articles on the subject. Voluntary displacement means that for the sake of others, we willingly go to places we'd rather not go. We move out of our comfort zones voluntarily and "displace" ourselves outside the familiar to us. Why? A need exists; a response from within is required; an inward call from God is felt; we go, because of who we are. Voluntary displacement can take us to the inner city or around the world. This calling can be for a brief time or for a lifetime.

Nouwen's life illustrates how caring deeply for others often interrupts our routines of life. It really was not difficult for Nouwen to leave his teaching positions at Notre Dame, Harvard and Yale divinity schools to accept an invitation to spend the final ten years of his life living and working as priest to the L'Arche Community for the severely mentally handicapped in Toronto. His specific daily responsibility was to care for Adam. It took Nouwen two hours each day to prepare Adam for breakfast. Yet Nouwen wrote on several occasions, "I learned far more from

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<sup>23</sup> Nouwen, Henri, Donald P. McNeil and Douglas A. Morrison. *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life*. Image Books, reprint edition, 1983.

Adam than he ever learned from me.” Again, I am coming to see that God wants us to be with others...not to prove that we are valuable to them.

Care deeply. Be deeply compassionate. Our care for others can be intimate or distant.

Questions:

1. As a male pastor, how can I express compassion appropriately in my servant leadership to females?
2. How can I increasingly make compassion central to my ministry, to my servant leadership?

## **6. Endurance: “Never, never, never, never give up!”**

A Salvation Army officer who graduated recently from the MVNU Master of Ministry program wrote to me following a class I taught. Among other comments, she stated, “I cannot get away from the discussion of Paul’s admonition to Archippus in Colossians 4:17. “Do not walk away from the assignment God has given you.”

She continued, “The hardest orders I have received . . . have been those to stay in my assignment and continue God’s work for me there.” The officer concludes, “Staying orders were a lot harder to swallow than marching orders.”

Paul’s message to Archippus is clear: “Do not walk away from the leadership assignment God has given to you.”

Paul’s message is the sixth and final core quality of the servant leader. It is a message of persistence, endurance, tenacity, and old fashioned “stick-to-it-iveness”

Tenacity and endurance have always been attributes vital to the Christian and the Christian leader. On various occasions, God commanded Moses to persist. God kept Moses focused on his objective. Later, Isaiah 40:30 underscores the rewards of patience, endurance, and persistence. “Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” Then, in Hebrews 12:12, Paul asks that we follow Christ’s example of endurance, “...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross...”

This endurance and clarity of purpose have also been the highlights of secular leadership.

As Prime Minister of Great Britain during his country's most trying period, Sir Winston Churchill was asked to return to his high school to deliver an important speech. He received a long and glowing introduction. He arose, went to the podium, and this was his speech: "Never, never, never, never give up!" Then he sat down.

Churchill captured in his memorable address the admonition of the Apostle Paul to Archippus, "Don't walk away from your work until God releases you from it.

Recently I've been thinking about endurance. I am struck by how it is always needed, often painful, and it is a gracious gift. Permit me to elaborate on those three characteristics.

**I. First, The Need for Endurance** Audacious tenacity - God inspired and empowered tenacity - spiritual tenacity, if you will - is needed as a core quality of the Christian leader. We don't know why Paul was compelled to speak these words to Archippus. However, Paul's words to his friend cause us to question why we are often tempted to give up on a project, an assignment, a responsibility, or a calling before genuine release comes from the Lord.

- A. Why are we tempted to give up as Christian workers?
  1. For sure, enemies of our soul want to defeat the Christian leader. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 6:12)
  2. Another reason we give up is that the problems facing us at times seem too difficult to solve. In the book, Staying Power, Anne and Ray Ortland talk about the three time periods all problems have.
    - a) Zone A is called "Desire to Achieve" and is characterized by idealism, perhaps naiveté, and maybe apprehension.
    - b) Zone B is highlighted by the need for endurance. Zone B is called the "Desire to Quit" and is characterized by confusion and conflict when problems arise. This is the danger zone: problems need to be identified, separated, spelled out and tackled, one by one. Zone B will end in one of two ways: we will quit and abort the project, or we will persevere with "bull dog" tenacity, resisting the temptation to quit. We can choose to believe that, even in a seemingly impossible situation, the God who has promised never to leave us or forsake us is present. We can choose to believe that, by the grace of God, there is a way through, over, under or around the confusing situation.



- c) This leads us to Zone C. Zone C is called “Achievement and Growth”. Christian leaders and the led characterize this zone by faith and personal satisfaction, and a sense of realism, maturity, and expectation.
3. We also give up because of misconceptions regarding the Christian life, work and ministry. These misconceptions can encourage us to give up before the job is completely finished.

“Progress is only being made when things are running smoothly.”

“The grass is greener on the other side.” “Bigger is better.”

“Suffering and hardship can’t be of God.” “This problem can’t be solved.”

“Success is gaining everyone’s approval.” “Failure is final.”

“I am nobody.”

“And one of the greatest misconceptions is that “good and godly people do not differ or make mistakes.”

## II. Secondly, there is the Pain of Endurance

The tendency, I believe, is to “move on” when pressure builds, when we do not get our way, or the recognition we receive isn’t what we desire.

It is painful to stay in the situation in the midst of conflict, uncomfortableness, misunderstanding, power struggles, conflicting situations and inappropriate expectations until God releases us from these assignments.

“Enduring” hardship through extraordinary times and situations requires a resolute faith in the God who has placed us in these assignments. And in these “painful” experiences, we must convictionally believe that we remain where God has placed us until he releases us, because we serve Him in these painful times, not the people who sometimes inflict the pain.

We can learn much about the pain of tenacity from Ernest Shackleton and his 1914 Antarctic Expedition. Not known as a Christian leader, yet he taught us much through example about the necessity of Endurance in our various leadership roles.

In August 1914, Ernest Shackleton, an intrepid British explorer, boarded the ship, Endurance. He and his team of 27 men set sail for the South Atlantic. The group wanted to be the first to cross the continent of Antarctica.

Early the next year, their ship was trapped in the ice. By October 1915, still half a continent away from their intended base, the ship was crushed by ice and sank to the bottom of the ocean. In the months that followed the crew’s food and water disappeared. Shackleton and his men, drifting on ice packs, were castaways in

one of the most savage regions of the world. Under Shackleton's leadership, they trekked over barren, frozen ice.

More than a year after the shipwreck Shackleton and his men were stranded on an island at the tip of Antarctica. Their food was dwindling, and there appeared little hope of rescue. Survival, Shackleton realized, depended on a bold act. Leaving most of the crew behind and with only a few of his men, he must reach a whaling outpost by crossing 800 miles of stormy seas in an open boat. Upon landing at St. George's Island, his only route to secure rescue for himself and his shipmates was still across an ominous range of glaciers and mountains that had never been crossed before. He took the chance. He had to endure. He and two others successfully reached the settlement. Amazingly, he saved his entire crew. Everyone survived. Everyone!

Paul's journeys, as outlined in the latter book of Acts, were filled with similar experiences! Listen again to Acts 27:25 - "Keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me."

- After being in jail for two years, Paul and others were on their way to Rome.
- Paul's admonition to the men on board the ship was spoken in the middle of a typhoon, a shipwreck, and no food for 14 days.
- BUT, God had earlier told Paul that "he would testify of God's grace in Rome." (Acts 23:11)
- In the midst of the Pain of getting to Rome -
  - The jail experience,
  - Typhoon, shipwreck and no food;
- Paul stated emphatically, ". . . keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."

### Ten Strategies for "Enduring"

The examples from Paul and Earnest Shackleton show that leading through extraordinary times and situations requires strategies for enduring. The following ten strategies are taken from Huntford's book, *Leading at the Edge: Leading Lessons from the Extraordinary Saga of Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition*.

1. Vision and Quick Victories: Never lose sight of the ultimate goal and focus energy on short-term objectives.
2. Symbolism and Personal Example: Set a personal example with visible, memorable symbols and behaviors.
3. Optimism and Reality: Instill optimism and self-confidence, but stay grounded in reality.

4. Stamina: Take care of yourself: Maintain your stamina and let go of guilt.
5. The Team Message: Reinforce the team message constantly: "We are one – we live or die together."
6. Core Team Values: Minimize status differences and insist on courtesy and mutual respect.
7. Conflict: Master conflict – deal with anger in small doses, engage dissidents and avoid needless power struggles.
8. Lighten Up! Find something to celebrate and something to laugh about.
9. Risk: Be willing to take the Big Risk.
10. Tenacious Creativity: Never give up – there's always another move.

### III. The Gift of Endurance

- A. This gift of "stick-to-it-iveness" – endurance or perseverance – is not a gift we give to other people. By no means.
  - Rather, the gift of tenacity is a grace gift from God to us . . . for the spiritual growth, Christian maturity and personal development we experience in the midst of "staying with it" until God releases us!
  - On many occasions I have stated, "leading MVNU is the greatest journey of faith I have ever experienced." In exercising tenacity – staying power – I have been the greatest benefactor. In choosing to believe that God is in the midst of a process, problem or confrontation, I have grown spiritually. I have matured in Christ significantly. Why? Because I have had to lead from my knees in dependency upon "the One who has called me to this assignment, believing He will complete in me and my work exactly what He has designed!"

On the quality of endurance, God spoke directly to Moses when Moses asked God to name someone else to be leader of the Jews in Egypt. God's reply to Moses was "I am sending you to the King of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of Egypt." Moses said, "I am nobody. No Lord, don't send me! I am a poor speaker, slow and hesitant. No Lord, please send someone else." God responded to Moses: "I will be with you!"

God went on to tell Moses "Tell them 'I am' has sent you to them," and God says to us, "It is I – the great 'I am' who calls, empowers, keeps and carries us."

**Endurance, With Contentment! What A Profound Gift From God To Us!**

God’s own gift of endurance allows us to respond to God’s call. Endurance enables us to “stay the course” until He releases us from an assignment! And who benefits the most? Only God knows. But, for sure, we who “endure” by God’s grace are blessed. Tenacity is a grace gift from God to us! I close this section by returning to Paul’s words to Archippus: Do not walk away from the assignment God gives to you!

**Core Values of the Christian Servant Leader**

The seven core values listed below are part of a Mount Vernon Nazarene University foundational document, *For This We Stand – Values Underlying the Mount Vernon Nazarene University Faith Community*. The seven are the core values that are part of Affirmation #2, “We Respect Others”. The entire set of twenty-one affirmations and their respective core values or tenets can be found in *For This We Stand* and the MVNU web site ([www.mvnu.edu](http://www.mvnu.edu)). We strive for the following behaviors. The seven core values of Affirmation #2 include:

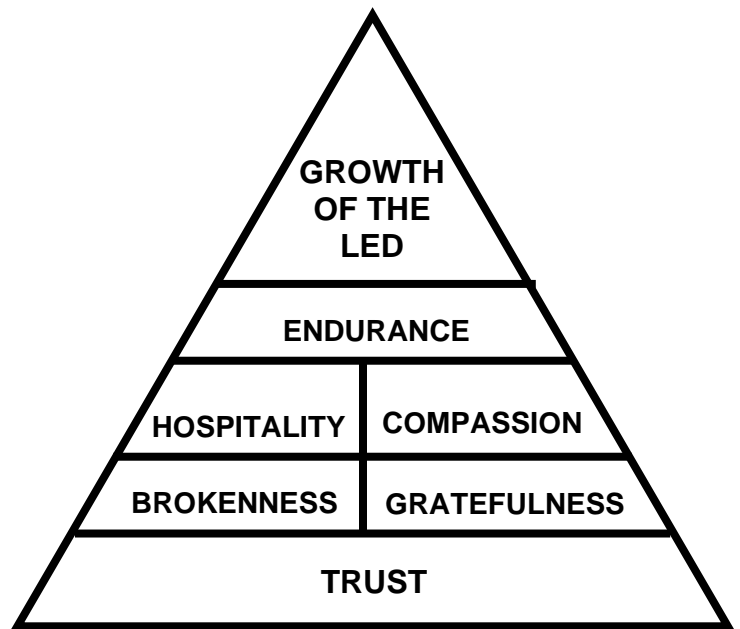
**MVNU Core Values, Affirmation #2**

**Core Qualities of a Servant Leader**

We respect others; therefore, we strive for the following behaviors:

1. A Magnanimous Spirit
2. A Servant Mentality
3. A Trustworthy Character
4. A Positive Influence
5. A Courteous Response
6. A Giving Motivation
7. An Appreciative Attitude

Our seven Core Values become our guideposts along the pathway of Christian Servant Leadership. The seven are how we put the six Core Qualities into action. The seven Core Values assure we “walk the talk” of Christian Servant Leadership, not just “talk the talk”. They help track our integrity assuring our words and actions are consistent. They are the indicators, they are the “Proof” that assures we track how we as an institution qualitatively grow. We affirm these to the way we live and work with others on campus. We believe, in so doing, that the



individuals with whom we work in an academic community will then grow in their faith and be strengthened in their spiritual journey. The proof of leading, we believe, is in the qualitative growth of the led. Therefore, we desire that on campus, we – faculty, staff, and students – mature in our faith and our walk with Christ in the midst of our life together on campus. The Core Values help guide us along that path.

It may be helpful here to present each of our seven core values and explain how they are manifested at MVNU. They characterize us at our best and convict us at our worst.

**Affirmation #2, WE RESPECT OTHERS. Therefore, we value and stand for...**

**1. A Magnanimous Spirit**

Committed Christians are big-spirited. They give others the benefit of the doubt. They recognize that mistakes can be made, even by themselves. They believe the best, not the worst, in others. They want others to succeed, not fail. They are happy when others receive attention, awards, and accolades. They don't "put people down" in order to build themselves up or have a healthy self-image. They freely forgive, even before forgiveness is asked.

Jesus taught us an unforgettable lesson about forgiveness. He said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." It's ironic. His "enemies" had not asked for forgiveness, nor did their behavior toward Jesus change when Jesus extended forgiveness to them. What difference, then, did forgiveness make? Not in outward circumstances, for sure. They continued to kill Him. However, His words of forgiveness made all the difference inwardly. He would not permit what others said or what they did to create anger, resentment, and bitterness within Him. His relationship to the Father was so much more important. Others' behavior toward Him would not be permitted to rupture the relationship with the Father. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." A magnanimous, forgiving spirit. And this must be our spirit.

**2. A Servant Mentality**

Christians embracing the lifestyle of holiness are challenged to find tangible, concrete ways to serve others in Jesus' name and say to fellow believers within the fellowship, "I love you. I care for you. You are my brother or sister in Christ."

In its briefest and most general understanding, ministry is service to others in Jesus' name. Certain words help us understand the various dimensions of Christian ministry - words like caring, sharing, growing, relating, teaching, and confronting. Ministry in New Testament perspective takes the form of holding the hand of a person engulfed in fear, listening intently to a person in trouble, crying with a person who is hurt, or embracing the individual who is grieving. It may include taking friends to the store for

groceries, sharing your talents with others, or confronting in love the lack of discipline or careless habits. Ministry encompasses the sharing of the Christian faith or a verse of scripture with another in time of need.

Christian ministry is the extension of Jesus in our world, incarnating the healing, guiding, sustaining, reconciling work of Jesus in the lives of those with whom we work and live. If you are a Christian, you are called to Christian ministry. From a biblical perspective the MVNU motto is on target -- "To seek to learn is to seek to serve."

Ministry understood in this broadest sense is the context for our specific ministry. We may be specifically called and gifted for pastoral ministry, teaching ministry, evangelism ministry, music ministry, or leadership ministry. But it is futile and self-defeating to seek to function within our particular calling while ignoring the broader calling to serve others in Jesus' name.

### 3. **A Trustworthy Character**

"Character is what you are," someone said, "when no one is looking at you." Character is the sum total of our values, priorities, commitments, and decisions. Increasingly, spirit-filled Christians develop a Christ-like character as they grow and mature in Christ.

Ephesians 4:25 exhorts us not to lie. "Put off falsehood," one translation states. The specific reference is to "speaking the truth" within the body of Christ, the fellowship of believers. But do Christians lie to one another?

I choose to believe that we don't lie to one another on purpose. Christians do, however, sometimes ignore other believers with whom their differences have created barriers. Conversation is therefore superficial. Discussion, if any, focuses on everything but the issue dividing the Christians. Is this lying?

Increasingly, our word must become our bond. What people "see" is what they should "get." Our lives should assume an authentic, transparent, and genuine nature. Our character is trustworthy, even in the academic arena. The College's code of academic integrity affirms our truthfulness in the exams taken on campus and the assignments submitted to teachers. Academic integrity is an essential component of MVNU.

We want people with whom we live, work, and study to see us as honest, not just with facts, dates, and figures, but with our emotions - particularly negative emotions that tend to divide and separate the Christian fellowship.

### 4. **A Positive Influence**

Have you ever been around someone that, when you left his or her presence, you felt about 3 inches tall? Some people act as if the only way to build themselves up is to put other people down.

Likewise, you have been around other people that, when you left their presence, you felt big, strong, and confident. You believed that with God and you, you could make a difference, overcome the obstacle, or succeed where you had failed.

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful to others, that it may benefit those who listen." This admonition in Ephesians 4:29 puts most of us under conviction. Our words tend to be self-serving rather than for others.

Sanctified Christians increasingly make a positive rather than a negative difference in the people with whom they associate and in the situation wherein they find themselves.

A good question to ask is this: Do people with whom I associate feel better or worse about themselves, their work, MVNU, life, and God as a result of my involvement with them? Determine to be a positive, rather than a negative, Christian - someone who builds up others instead of tearing them down, a person whose words "benefit" those who listen, not undermines, belittles, or destroys them.

As Christians mature in Christ, the focus must be on building up others, not tearing them down; on encouragement, not discouragement; on supporting, not undermining; on healing, not hurting; on caring, not indifference; on others, not on ourselves.

## 5. **A Courteous Response**

The way of holiness is a path whereby committed Christians "are being renewed in the attitude of their minds." The Ephesians 4:23 passage is given in the context of a contrast between ways Christians and non-Christians live their lives and respond to others.

Attitudes of the heart that should increasingly characterize Spirit-filled Christians include the following:

- I love you - you are my brother/sister in Christ;
- I need you - you have strengths and gifts I do not have;
- I accept you - you are being changed by Christ as I am being changed;
- I respect you - you are different, yet we are one in Christ;
- I trust you - you desire to serve the same Christ as I;
- I serve you - I want to minister grace to you.

These attitudes of the heart enable us to respond courteously to others, even within the Christian fellowship, who do not reflect the same attitudes and behavior towards us.

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

## 6. **A Giving Motivation**

The biblical reference to giving we have heard throughout our lives: "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). And the usual context in which we focus this admonition is in reference to money.

Money, for sure, must be included in the discussion. Another equally strong biblical principle states, "to whom much is given, much is required" (Luke 12:48 b).

But "giving" on the MVNU campus for most of us, if it relates only to money, permits us to get off the hook and allows us to miss the principle.

A commodity just as rare as money on campus is time. And the giving of our time is included in the biblical injunction.

Time is needed to greet students on campus, to get acquainted with them, assist them in adjusting to a new, if not strange, environment, bring them into our friendship loop, invite them to walk with us to class, to chapel, to Boost. Remember your first days on campus? Anxiety? Fear? Homesickness? Freedom? Outsider? Rejected? Pain?

Find someone who is new to campus and spend some time with them, just because it is right and it should be done.

Look around for some students from outside the United States. The number is growing. Don't panic out of a lack of knowledge of their first language or their culture. What they need is a friend, someone to help them. Ask them (and others) these questions:

1. How are you doing?
2. How are you coming along with...(a specific problem, project, etc.)?
3. How can I help you in...? (Be as specific as possible.)

These are good questions to ask visitors you spot on campus or prospective students who "invade" the campus (and sometimes your rooms!) on big days for student recruitment.

"Christ died while we were yet sinners." We did not deserve the gift of eternal life He gave to us. Look around, often, and see people in need of something you can give. You give, like Christ, not because the other person



"deserves" the gift necessarily, but because you desire to love others as Christ loved us.

## 7. **An Appreciative Attitude**

The contemporary song asks the question, "How can I say a million thanks for the things You have done for me - things so undeserved ... the voices of a thousand angels cannot express my gratitude. All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe it all to Thee." The refrain of the song continues with thanksgiving to God for all that He has done.

Holiness people are grateful people; grateful to God, through His unmerited grace, for saving, sanctifying, and establishing them firmly in the way of holiness. A spirit of thanksgiving must be the continuous response of the committed Christian to the goodness of God in his/her life.

Yet, our expressions of appreciation should extend to others who help us along the journey. This includes other students, roommates, teachers, and ... yes, even administrators!

Songwriter and musician Ray Boltz was on campus several years ago for a concert. During the concert, he shared the background for writing one of his top hits at that time. He wrote the song for Pastor's Appreciation Day in his local church. The heart of the song expresses gratitude to his pastor. "Thank you for giving to the Lord, I'm a life that's been changed...Jesus took the gift you gave. That's why I'm here today."

In addition to expressing praise and thanksgiving to God, find another person, daily, to whom you can say - honestly and genuinely -

I thank you.

I'm grateful to you.

I appreciate you.

And be as specific as you can in expressing your gratitude to the other person. You may have to look hard each day for someone to whom you can express gratitude. But keep looking...you will find someone.

The Swedish family therapist, Swen Walroos, in his outstanding text, *Family Communication*, concluded from his extensive work with troubled families that the ratio of criticism to compliments in dysfunctional families was 7 or 8 to 1; that is, there were seven or eight criticisms to every one compliment. He states, "My goal in family therapy is to reverse the ratio; that is, to help families give seven to eight compliments to every one criticism."

I'm concerned when the pervasive mood or conversation of a campus, dorm, a "clique" or group, a family, or an individual is overwhelmingly

negative. Something is fundamentally wrong with that individual, group, or institution. Usually we can find what we look for if we're looking for the negative in others or in this institution. Likewise, if you focus on the positive in others or in this institution, you will find it.

And when you find it...discipline yourself to express appreciation. Develop an appreciative attitude. It is healthy for you physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Find someone each day to whom you can say...

I thank you.

I'm grateful to you.

I appreciate you.

### **Core Attitudes of the Christian Servant Leader**

Core attitudes of the heart (Ephesians 4:23) that should increasingly characterize spirit-filled Christians and Christ-like leaders include the following:

1. I love you--*you are my brother/sister in Christ.*
2. I need you--*you have strengths and gifts I do not have.*
3. I accept you--*you are being changed by Christ as I am being changed.*
4. I respect you--*you are different, yet we are one in Christ.*
5. I trust you--*you desire to serve the same Christ as I serve.*
6. I serve you--*I want to minister grace to you.*

These are key attitudes for the Christian leader who seeks to nurture faith and life in the persons he/she leads. From these basic attitudes, we derive specific goals for the people we serve.

Recently, I shared the following personal goals with the MVNU staff. These goals that I have for myself as I work with each one of them are very important. I want the faith of employees of MVNU to be strengthened as a result of working at this institution. My personal goals for working with the University employees are:

1. Honor your time.
2. Value your work.
3. Build your confidence.

4. Increase your competence.
5. Support your decisions.
6. Hear your words.
7. Network your ideas.
8. Affirm your dreams.
9. Simplify your assignment.
10. Strengthen your faith.

At Mount Vernon Nazarene University, we choose to view ourselves as brothers and sisters in Christ whose work here is a sacred calling. We function in our individual assignments out of a profound commitment to biblical principles, Christian values, and our theological traditions. The relationship between employees and their supervisors produces personal and professional growth on the part of both individuals. Training, ongoing dialogue, and accountability take place in the context of our understanding of the vision of MVNU to truly be an “academic community of faith, shaping Christ-like leaders for lifelong service.”

Opportunities to evaluate, revise, and improve our ministry assignments at MVNU are given to us through a prescribed employee review process. From my own experience with a Board committee, I recognize that these occasions have the potential of generating some anxiety. Yet our approach to them should always be one of hope: for strengthening overall effectiveness and increasing efficiency in specific work assignments; for setting goals for personal and professional development; and for spiritual growth and new or improved ministry opportunities as a result of serving at MVNU. Both as individuals and as a community, these times are necessary and valuable for cultivating our commitment to excellence for Christ (Colossians 3:23).

I pray that the review process will bring out the best in both employee and supervisor, and that the personal and professional growth desired and needed will result. With open communication and God’s grace and mercy working through us, the process can produce plans and dreams vital to the future of MVNU. Thank you for your important role in this endeavor.

The following questions help prepare employees for the employee review process. Notice the goal of the dialog is the personal and professional growth of the employee.

1. How does your specific assignment fit into and support the overall mission and vision of Mount Vernon Nazarene University? How does your department do so?
2. In what ways have you developed and enhanced your job knowledge in the past year? Have adequate opportunities been provided both for training and for personal growth?
3. What specific tasks or accomplishments this year best express your commitment to quality service to students, fellow workers, and outside customers? How have you felt that your gifts and talents have been most effectively used?

4. What aspects of your work this year reflect your stewardship of the responsibilities given to you? Are there additional avenues of service you would like to pursue (committees, new assignments, etc.)?
5. How would you describe your attitude toward your work? In what ways has your initiative contributed to the continuous improvement of our campus community? How does your work support the recruiting, retention, and care of our students?
6. How have problem solving and resourcefulness played a role in your successes or challenges this year? What additional resources might assist you as you strive for excellence?
7. In what ways have you contributed to teamwork in your area and how has teamwork influenced your work positively? How can the climate of collaboration at MVNU be enhanced?
8. Has your sense of calling and personal ministry been fulfilled through your work endeavors this year? Do you feel affirmed as a valuable asset to MVNU?
9. How has your leadership positively impacted those with whom you work and the campus as a whole? In what ways can those who lead you do so more effectively?
10. What short-term and long-term goals would you set for your work in the coming year? For your department as a whole?

As time permits, develop a list of parallel questions for you to discuss with the persons whom you are responsible to lead. Remember, the PROOF of servant leadership is in the qualitative growth of the led – individually and as a group. What a goal! What a task! What a privilege!

## **Conclusion**

Theme Six, PROOF, gives us the tools we need as Christian leaders to facilitate the growth of the Body of Christ, God’s people. The goal is that with these tools, as Christian servant leaders, we can help those we lead experience qualitative growth, or Proof.

Theme Six focuses on the leader as a person. As noted in the beginning of the section, Gandhi said, “We must be the change we seek to produce”, and the theme examined the Christian who seeks to lead with the mind of Christ. The Christian servant leader has at least six core qualities: Trust, Gratefulness, Brokenness, Compassion, Hospitality, and Endurance, with Trust being the foundation upon which the others build. Then, we looked at how Mount Vernon Nazarene University Core Values put into practice or assures we “walk the talk” of the six Core Qualities of Christian servant leadership. In this way, these core values and core qualities become part of our personnel operation at MVNU, part of our personnel management process.

This process of embedding these core qualities and core values into MVNU's operation fuels the relationship between Christian servant leaders and the led at MVNU. This process engenders dialogue and communication regarding how the Christian relationship takes place between the leader and the led.

Now, it is time to review the themes, MOTIVATION, LIFESTYLE, PURPOSE, METHOD, PAIN, and the EVIDENCE...of servant leadership and tie them back to the three cornerstones where we started this investigation, namely Vision, Passion, and Obsession.

*“A few years ago, I met an old professor at the University of Notre Dame. Looking back on his long life of teaching, he said with a funny twinkle in his eyes: ‘I have always been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I slowly discovered that my interruptions were my work.’”*

Henry J. M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Nouwen, Henri. *Out of Solitude*. Ave Maria Press, 1984.

# *Postscript*

## *Postscript*

### **Let's Review - Convictions of a Reconciled and Transformed Christ-like Leader**

Remember the first two verses of the hymn "The Servant's Song"?

*Brother, let me be your servant; let me be as 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.*

Again, I ask the question: What will constitute "success" in our leadership ministry? The way we define success will determine our leadership focus. We must have at the core of our being these three compelling convictions especially when good and godly people collide over vision and values:

1. Who we are as the People of God;
2. What we are called to do in the work of God; and
3. How we live together as the family of God.

These convictions are the heart of Christ-like leadership. They comprise the essence of The Servant's Song. A vision! A passion! An obsession! Let's look again at these convictions to which the Christ-like leader is captive.

#### **Conviction #1: Christ-like leadership is rooted in A VISION FOR MINISTRY.**

Vision has to do with seeing things clearly and at a great distance. Sound familiar? It is seeing what others do not see. A vision is a consuming, fervent, and compelling inner picture. All leaders are supposed to have *vision*. Fundamental for the servant leader is not so much organizational *vision*, but theological *vision*. This we must not forget!

Foundational to the servant leader is a theological vision of our identity within the Christian fellowship. Listen again to the biblical images of our relationship to others:

- 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.

Effective leadership within the Christian fellowship, I believe, is grounded in this biblical perspective of our identity, 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 servant leaders must be deeply theological. The degree to which we remain captive to this conviction will determine the degree to which our leadership is judged “successful” in the biblical perspective.

Affirming the identity of those with whom we work within the fellowship is fulfilling. However, the servant leader gets equally excited about helping others succeed – regardless of where they are on their spiritual journey.

Ministry, as you know, is service to others in Jesus' name. It is the extension of the service of Jesus in our world. The People of God are Spirit-empowered to incarnate His healing, guiding, sustaining, and reconciling work in the lives of those with whom we work and live. If we are Christians, we are called to this ministry.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together* lists seven expressions of ministry by which a Christian community must be judged and characterized. Remember them?

- The Ministry of Holding One's Tongue
- The Ministry of Meekness
- The Ministry of Listening
- The Ministry of Active Helpfulness -- Simply assisting others within the Christian community in external matters.
- The Ministry of Bearing (Supporting)
- The Ministry of Proclaiming (enfleshing the Word of God through our words and deeds)
- The Ministry of Authority (Leadership)

We may be specifically called to and gifted as pastor, teacher, evangelist, musician, or missionary. In the book, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*<sup>25</sup>, Dr. J. Kenneth Grider, highly esteemed professor emeritus of Nazarene Theological Seminary, reflects on his own need to grow in grace through service. He shares in his book this prayer:

*Father, I am Your bread. Break me up and pass me around to the poor and needy of this world.*

*I am Your towel. Dampen me with tears and with me wash the feet of people who are weary with walking and with working.*

*I am Your light. Take me out to where the darkness is thick, there to shine and let Christ shine.*

*I am Your pen. Write with me whatever word You wish, and placard the word where the least and the lost of the world will see it and read it and be helped by it.*

*I am Your salt. Sprinkle me on all the things that You want for people, so that my faith and love and hope will flavor their experiences.*

*I am Your water. Pour me into people who thirst for You but do not even know that it is You for whom they thirst. Pour into them the trust that You have helped me to place in You. Pour into them the inward witness that is in me. Pour into them the promise that soon the summer drought will pass and refreshing rivers of water will gush down over them.*

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<sup>25</sup> Grider, J. Kenneth and Thomas C. Oden. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994.



*I am Yours, Lord God. Use me up in what You will, when You will, where You will, for whom You will, even if it means that I am given responsibilities that are considerable and costly. Amen!!*

Read Matthew 25:30-34. Jesus defined success in Christian ministry in terms of service or self-giving to others in the name and place of God. This call and command to serve must increasingly define and shape our vision for ministry.

### **Conviction #2: Christ-like leadership is rooted in A PASSION FOR FORMATION.**

Eighteen years ago, while teaching at the European Nazarene Bible College, I penned this definition of Christian leadership.

*Christian leadership is humble service to others in the community of faith whose head is in Christ for the purpose of enabling them, through teaching and example, to live their lives under the Lordship of Christ, and to understand, accept, and fulfill their ministry to each other and their mission in the world.*

Leadership, according to the late Dr. Harold Reed, "is known by the personalities it enriches, not by those it dominates or captivates." Our leadership within the community of faith must convictionally focus on the qualitative growth of the led as ministers of Jesus Christ.

This perspective on leadership forces us to ask some probing questions. How can our ministry of servant leadership enable *others* to fulfill *their* ministry to each other and *their* mission in the world? Are the people being served growing as Christians? Are they themselves becoming servants? These are crucial concerns for leadership in the community of faith.

ALL Christians - yes, even those with whom we work who sometimes make life so difficult - are *called* and gifted for the ministry of Christ. We must not ignore these challenging people. These individuals, as impossible as it may seem on some occasions, remain our responsibility. They, too, need to be enabled "through teaching and example, to live their lives under the lordship of Christ, and to understand, accept, and fulfill their ministry to each other and their mission in the world."

This conviction regarding our responsibility for those with whom we work demands keen insight, deep "caring," and Spirit-empowered understanding. "Only the person who can see the invisible can do the impossible," I once read. Questions such as "what if..." and "why not..." ought to permeate our mindset regarding the Christians with whom we work. What if...they were all called to Christian ministry? Why not...assume they are, and proceed accordingly!

If we are driven by this passion for formation, then ministry *to* the people and ministry *for* the people will become ministry *with* the people and ministry *by* the people. Let's review. Conviction #1: Christ-like leadership is rooted in a vision for ministry, and #2, in a passion for formation.

### **Conviction #3: Christ-like leadership is rooted in AN OBSESSION FOR COMMUNITY.**

Jesus challenges us in Luke 6:40, "When a student is fully trained he will become like his teacher." (Or his school president, or his seminary professor, or his pastor!) Ministry is always incarnated and enfleshed. Ministry must be lived out!

What is it about ourselves that we want our community – our students and faculty, or our parishioners – to catch from us? We want our people to catch from us a servant spirit, committed to *motivating, equipping* and *enabling others to also serve in Jesus' name*.

What we are confronted with is the need to communicate a lifestyle within the community that is distinctly Christian - and self-giving at the core. But how do you communicate a lifestyle? How do you teach commitments, priorities, values, and spiritual disciplines? How do you teach a lifestyle?

Whatever else it means, it demands taking seriously the principle of imitation. Herbert Mayer, in his book, *Pastoral Care, Its Roots and Renewal*, reminds us that this principle was a key in Christian leadership for eighteen centuries. We must recapture this principle if we take seriously the biblical mandate to be an example to believers. Paul, humbly, gave instructions for being imitators to the Christians under his care. We must do the same for those for whom we are responsible.

The broad principle of imitation must possess us if we are to effectively transfer our vision, passion, and obsession within the Christian fellowship. This principle is developed and made specific in Ephesians 4:25-32. The passage outlines a servant leadership lifestyle within the Christian community.

The fourth chapter of Ephesians begins with the challenge to walk worthy of our calling as Christians. The characteristics of the person "walking worthy" follow the challenge. We are instructed to be gentle, humble, patient, and supportive of each other. In so living, we will "maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (v. 3).

But, as Christian *leaders*, we must express gentleness, humbleness, patience, and supportiveness by exercising the key leadership principle found in Ephesians 4:15 - "speak the truth in love." This critical concept is fleshed out in verses 25-32.

Paul, in these verses, is not so much talking about administrative techniques, but Christian attitudes underlying our actions and activities within the community. We are co-laborers together in the body of Christ (v. 25). The people with whom we work are God's own creation. Because of this fundamental Christian conviction, we can *be honest...with the believers; immediate...in dealing with conflict among us; up-building...with our words; and forgiving*, even when others do not forgive us.

We express, therefore, gentleness, humbleness, patience, and supportiveness through words and deeds. Words and deeds done by others to us must never be permitted to create bitterness and resentment within us.

An obsession for community is not an option for the servant leader. It is an imperative, even in conflictual situations. Because relationships are so important to us, we "care enough to confront" our brother or sister in Christ. We care too much about the relationship to ignore

destructive behavior. We speak the truth in love, and we care enough to allow our brother or sister in Christ to speak truthfully to us.

Paul's instructions are not psychological in nature; they are deeply theological. The Spirit of God is deeply concerned with the speech of His people (Ephesians 4:30a). These instructions are foundational for servant leaders who take seriously the principle of imitation, and who want their faith community to catch from them a servant spirit.

As I conclude, let me share with you a question I ask myself. "What does it mean to be a servant to my students, faculty, and staff where I must function in the role of university president?" What does it mean to be a servant in the midst of *all* the expectations, roles, and functions?

And what about the risks? Misunderstandings? Abuses? Betrayals? Pain? Hurts? Is it worth it? Is it really worth the risk of being a servant leader?

My understanding of being a Christ-like leader is growing. Slowly, but with inner confidence, I am developing a deep conviction--theologically grounded--that I must accept the risks and serve my people with humility, gentleness, patience, and encouragement if I am to be a servant leader.

And you, too, will be challenged to find such responses in the situations you face or will face! Our people will not see us as finished products. Rather, they will discover in us an on-going process of transformation into Christ-likeness (II Corinthians 3:18).

Our challenge is to lead from a reconciled and transformed heart. If we are captured by a vision for ministry, motivated by a passion for ministry formation, and characterized by an obsession for a Christ-like leadership lifestyle within the community, then our group -- regardless of its size -- will be life-giving, growth-producing, and *distinctly Christian*. In addition, this vision, passion, and obsession will increasingly empower our responsibility groups to reach out and serve others in Jesus' name.

*This* is Christ-like leadership! To *this* ministry we are uniquely called. We measure our success in ministry by *this* standard!

*Brother/sister, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you.  
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.*

May it be so, Lord. Amen!

**“A Christian servant leader  
is one who is a servant  
First.”**



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