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Social Change Model of Leadership Development

What does it mean to be a pastoral leader? What is God asking of us?¹ Throughout Jesus' ministry, we witness a genuine servanthood approach toward humanity, especially the marginalized, disadvantaged, and disenfranchised—the poor, the sick, the ritually unclean. Jesus expanded the kingdom of God to places, people, and cultures that some people had never considered Him to be interested in.

Therefore, the focus of effective pastoral leadership is not bigger church edifices but community outreach ministry. It emphasizes being in communion with God and one another. As we follow God's instruction to minister to people's physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs, we share the good news of salvation and God's love through life-on-life evangelism. He requires a total life commitment from His followers. Christians cannot divorce the teachings of Jesus from the method of Jesus yet expect the results Jesus had.

Biblical values

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development² is a critical outline for the church to be a deliberately incarnational organization. Judson University Professor Keith Krispin, Jr., asserts, "Though this model does not emerge from a Christian setting, the focus on values, collaboration, common purpose, and citizenship certainly resonate with biblical understandings of Christian community."³ Indeed, it approaches leadership as "a purposeful collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change."⁴ The model rests upon the following assumptions about leadership:

- › Socially responsible
- › Collaborative
- › A process, not a position
- › Inclusive and accessible to all people
- › Values-based



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Changing self to change others

The Social Change Model implores every leader to be cognizant of the eight Cs:

"Consciousness of self means being aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action."⁵ It is the key to being able to develop a consciousness of others.



"Congruence refers to thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, authenticity, and honesty toward others. . . .

"Commitment is the psychic energy that motivates the individual to serve and that drives the

collective effort. Commitment implies passion, intensity, and duration."⁶ It guides both group activity as well as its intended outcomes.

"Collaboration is to work with others in a common effort. It constitutes the cornerstone value of the group leadership effort because it empowers self and others through trust."⁷ As a group process, leadership collaboration encourages people to surpass individual goals, interests, and behaviors.

"Common Purpose means to work with shared aims and values. It facilitates the group's ability to engage in collective analysis of the issues at hand and the task to be undertaken. Common purpose is best achieved when all members of the group share in the vision and participate . . . in the purpose and goals of the . . . activity. . . .

"Controversy with Civility recognizes . . . that differences in viewpoint are inevitable, and . . . must be aired openly but with civility. Civility implies respect for others, willingness to hear other's views, and . . . restraint in critiquing the views and actions of others."⁸ It requires trust. "Conflicts need to be resolved but also integrated into the common purpose."⁹

"Citizenship is the process whereby the individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community . . . through leadership development activity. To be a good citizen is to work for positive change on the behalf of others."¹⁰

Change is the ability to adapt to constantly evolving environments and situations while maintaining the core functions of the group. Change "is the value 'hub' which gives meaning . . . to the [eight] C's. . . [It] is the . . . goal of the creative process of leadership—to make a better world . . . for self and others."¹¹

In dealing with the first three elements—consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment—we enhance leader development by expanding the individual's personal characteristics. The next set of three elements—collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility—enlarges organizational capability. Then the individual will become more influential not only within the church but also as a citizen of society.

Barriers to the community

The Social Change Model is also connected to the four elements of critical consciousness development, presented by service-learning practitioner Susan Cipolle:¹²

Self-awareness “means having a clear understanding of [one’s] level of privilege, . . . values, . . . role in society, and . . . responsibility to others.”¹³

Awareness of others leads to a broader perspective of others. It means that church members collaborate with those of different backgrounds in the community. Instead of doing inward-focused events, they begin to explore opportunities to serve outside the walls of the church. As church members interact with community members, they hear personal stories and community challenges. Perhaps, through such interaction, they begin to see the community as people belonging to God instead of as projects or statistics. As they become less judgmental and more compassionate toward others, the barriers between church and community will break down. Seeing beyond stereotypes, they begin to acknowledge the reality of injustice and inequity.

Awareness of social issues leads to “a broader perspective of social issues. . . . As [church members] inform themselves on social, economic, and political issues,”¹⁴ they will start to examine their own beliefs and develop solution-focused constructive services and community involvement.

Ethics of service, or seeing one’s potential to make meaningful changes, is the process of discipleship, in which disciples make other disciples through positive service experiences. It “enhances their feelings of competency and *efficacy*”¹⁵ as difference-makers. Church members who have developed a clear sense of values are more likely to live in accordance with their beliefs as disciples. Disciples who regard service as a part of their identity are more likely to choose a profession in which they can contribute to society.

Why some leave church

Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, co-founders of Minds at Work, say, “Research shows that the single biggest cause of work burnout is not work overload, but working too long without experiencing your own personal development.”¹⁶ If people lack personal development or growth opportunity, they will leave the organization. The church faces the same reality. Church ministry consultant Reggie McNeal observes: “A growing number of people are leaving the institutional church for a new reason. They are not leaving

because they have lost faith. They are leaving the church to preserve their faith. They contend that the church no longer contributes to their spiritual development.”¹⁷

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development has been the most frequent leadership theory used in leadership development programs.¹⁸ It is an essential component of personal development in both *leader development* and *leadership development*. *Leader development* seeks to increase individuals’ capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes.¹⁹ The term *leadership development* is “the expansion of the organization’s capacity to enact the basic leadership tasks needed for collective work.”²⁰

Leader development cultivates such character traits as integrity, determination, transparency, passion, and humility, while leadership development focuses on organizational and managerial ability by establishing direction, motivating and inspiring people, planning, solving problems, budgeting, and so forth. We must invest in both leader development and leadership development.

Helping the helpless

Research shows that when students participate in planning and directing service-learning experiences, their academic and civic engagement increases. In addition, when given opportunities to voice their opinions and make presentations, students’ public speaking and leadership skills improve.²¹

For example, Cipolle suggests the following questions be discussed when volunteering at a homeless shelter as a way to implement the critical consciousness aspect of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development:²²

- *Knowledge*—What were your first impressions of the shelter?
- *Comprehension*—How was it similar to or different from what you expected?
- *Analysis*—What parts of the experience have been most challenging to you?
- *Synthesis*—What have you personally learned about yourself from this service?
- *Evaluation*—What ideas do you have to help the situation of homelessness?

Mindset for ministry

Both Kegan and Tobert regard successful organization growth as requiring three specific mindsets: (1) a socialized mind, (2) a self-authorizing mind, and (3) a self-transforming mind.²³

- › A *socialized mind* is when leaders develop team players and faithful followers as they align with people and build relationships.
- › A *self-authorizing mind* is when leaders focus on an agenda, learn to lead, develop their own frame of work, focus on problem-solving, and are independent.
- › A *self-transforming mind* is when leaders become “meta-leaders,” able to mobilize people and organizations to collaborate in times of crisis. Instead of problem-solving, they invest their time in problem-finding.

According to Astin, “[A leader is] one who is able to effect positive **change** for the betterment of others, the community, and society. All people, in other words, are potential leaders. Moreover, the **process** of leadership cannot be described simply in terms of the behavior of an individual; rather, leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change.”²⁴

Intentional change

The church must become a consciously deliberate developmental organization that equips and educates disciples through intentional and sustainable personal development. We need to create a culture and environment in which individuals learn to improve their self-efficacy as difference-makers for the kingdom of God. When church members and community members collaboratively engage in meaningful service-learning and social change, we will connect people socially and spiritually both inside and outside of the ecclesiastical organizations.

Community outreach ministry is about first seeking His kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Therefore, the fundamental question is: Are we the people God calls us to be? Are we faithful, tangible, recognizable, and visible expressions of the kingdom of God in our homes, neighborhoods, communities, and the world? Let us ever remember, ministry begins not with *what* or *how* but with *who*—the God who loves us and those whom He sends us to love.



- 1 A version of this article was first published as a chapter in the book *Burst the Bubble: Finding Your Passion for Community Outreach* by Sung K. Kwon (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2017). Available in print and as an eBook at adventistbookcenter.com. Used by permission.
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- 22 Cipolle, *Service-Learning and Social Justice*, 12.
- 23 Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); William R. Torbert, *Managing the Corporate Dream* (Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin, 1987).
- 24 Astin et al., 16.

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