Dear Saints,

Everyone expects the missionary to be a leader. The calling organization is looking for leaders and the local team expects that this person moving from the other side of the world must be a leader. But then we read what Jesus says to his followers:

You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. (Matt 20:25-27 NLTSe).

The last church I pastored in the United States had good, dedicated and successful leadership. The church was the best-led and organized church I have been a member of. But the “Natural Church Development” test said it’s weak area was “empowering leadership.” This shocked the elders. It proved the test wrong! No, it revealed to them a real weakness there; they led well, but they didn’t help empower everyone to be leaders, too, in the areas God gifted them.

Missionaries, let us let God use us to serve and help others be leaders for Christ. I am praying for you! It will only be by His grace and Spirit that you can successfully serve the needs of His church and His people, be an example of Christ’s kingdom, and help direct the church heavenward while making sure you do not “lord it over them”! You have an impossible task. Aren’t you glad we have a God that can do the impossible. “For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13 NIV).
QUALITIES NEEDED TO BE AN EFFECTIVE IDE LEADER

We may not think of every Inter-division Employee (IDE) as a leader but the truth is, in order to be effective, leadership skills are needed for all mission assignments today. From among the numerous qualities and skills that today’s leaders need to develop, here are five qualities that missionaries will find useful as they lead out in their job assignment. (Adapted and paraphrased to fit the duties of IDEs from *Free Business Ebooks on Leadership* by Dennis Sommer and Hannah du Plessis).

**Vision** – is the first of all skills and qualities that a person needs whose business is to serve people. In order to lead out in successful service, those whom you serve need to know that you really care about them. You show that you care by the excellent service you render to them. Vision is essential for excellent service because leaders must have the ability to see things not as they are but as they can become. When the direction the school, the hospital, or the organization needs to take is defined, the future is defined as well. Therefore, as leaders, IDEs need to have a mission that matters. They must become impassioned by a vision of improvement in the lives of the people where they serve, and that passion should become a driving force in all that they do during their tenure of service.

**High Ethics** – that is, develop high standards of honesty that will translate into honorable dealings with the individuals with whom you serve. To live by such ethical standards, you must be clear on what they are yourself. All IDEs should remember that they do not only represent themselves and the General Conference; they also represent God.

**Communication** – is a very important skill because the IDE must be able to pass along messages to those who are being served. These messages should be communicated in such a clear, concise, and culturally-appropriate way that those who are being served will be enabled to understand and articulate their shared vision.

**Flexibility** – IDEs need to understand that all wisdom does not reside in them just because they are the ones who are coming to share. Thus, an IDE must be willing to be taught as well as teach. Leaders should be committed to furthering their own education so that the information they are conveying will be current and up-to-date.

**Energy** – As a leader, the IDE needs an enormous amount of energy and the ability to energize and invigorate others. You will not be able to move mission forward unless you are passionate about helping move it yourself.

Other leadership skills the IDE would benefit by developing are risk taking, decision making, power, listening, building rapport, passion, change, support, and more. In today’s world, managers and executives are becoming obsolete and are being replaced by leaders. This means that IDEs today must empower and lead rather than merely give orders and manage people.

Rosa Banks
GC Associate Secretary

Measure thy life by loss
instead of gain:
Not by the wine drunk,
but the wine poured forth:
For love’s strength standeth
in love’s sacrifice:
And whoso suffers most,
hath most to give.
- J. Hudson Taylor -

Missionary kids & teens that attended the 2009 Thailand Institute.
Wonderful issue of [Global Connections]. You are right, we need to do all we can to help persons deal with the financial crisis...One comment: with regards to kids, I would like to suggest that the article [Teaching Children About Money, April 2009] be even more specific by giving each child an allowance, and stipulating that they pay for a bicycle, with part of their monthly allowance. That sort of thing helps them learn about how to deal with money.

William McGhee, India

I really enjoyed the latest Global Connections newsletter on managing your money. It was so nice to receive something special for IDEs! I enjoyed the practical advice and read it from cover to cover right away!

Thanks IWM!

Kristi Kiš, São Tomé e Principe

Frequently Asked Question:

We will soon be heading home on permanent return. We would enjoy staying in touch with what is happening among missionaries. Is it possible to continue receiving the Global Connections newsletter when we are no longer IDEs?

Yes, you certainly can continue to receive Global Connections. We have a growing list of missionaries (serving and returned) who receive an e-copy of Global Connections. Just send a request with a current email address to iwm@andrews.edu and our layout editor will include you on our email list. You can also access the newsletter on-line at iwm.adventist.mission.org. Click on the Global Connections tab.
Resources for Cross-cultural Leaders

Bennis, Warren, Goleman, Daniel, O’Toole, James. 2008. Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor. New York: Jossey-Bass. While appreciating the challenges and health of leaders, this book calls us all to embrace honesty as we share information, relate to one another, and go about our work.


Reports the conclusions of a ten-year research project to conceptualize, operationalize, test, and validate a cross-level integrated theory of the relationship between cultural and societal, organizational, and leadership effectiveness.


Jesus, Our Shepherd

Use the code in to unlock the memory verse. Break the code by matching the symbols and writing the letter in the space above each symbol. When you are finished, you will discover something about our Shepherd, Jesus.

Answer: I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. John 10:14

You Know You’re an MK When. . .

The first thing you ask your parents on the phone is “What time is it?”
If you have ever visited an administrative official in another culture you know that this event can be a most memorable or a rather disappointing experience. Memorable, because you may discover that in some places leadership is accompanied with fascinating symbols of power, dignity and deference. Disappointing, because you find your high hopes dashed by what feels like a whim. At moments like this you have come face to face with the reality of power and powerlessness.

Encountering the Powerful

How do you greet a person in power? Faced with the prospect of meeting an official you soon realize that your usual instincts, finely tuned by experience in your own country, do not necessarily serve you well. You don’t want to offend him or her, and you don’t want to make a fool of yourself. But, do you shake hands or not? If you do shake hands, how firmly? With or without an embrace? At what point is a bear hug appropriate? In some places you may wonder about greeting with a kiss? One cheek—which one? Both cheeks? Three times or even four (that depends on the region even in France)? Other cultures may require a bow? But how deep?

It is true that shaking hands will serve you well in most cultures, but if you are a man in an Arab country don’t do what I did when visiting a female official in Brunei, a strictly Muslim country. When the moment came to greet her, old habits on autopilot just took over. You guessed right: Unforgivably, I extended my hand to the woman who graciously tolerated my faux pas. My colleagues at the mission institute were less forgiving, because I should have known.

The Powerful and the Powerless

Missionaries in culture shock may be tempted to dismiss all this “fuss” with ritual and formality as superficiality. Yet rituals are not just useless forms. As visible behaviors, they reflect the host culture’s worldview and deeper values. In high-context cultures they can communicate the subtleties of status, power, and pride in an almost infinite variety of styles and techniques that I am not used to coming from a low-context culture. Experience also tells us that cultures have developed distinctive patterns how power is used and how the powerful relate to the powerless.

Take for instance North Americans who pride themselves on valuing egalitarian relationships. Sure politicians have a certain power but they better make good use of it to solve problems—a rather utilitarian view of power. I have just been reading Michael Watkins article on “Obama’s First 90 Days” in the Harvard Business Review of June 2009 in which he grades the US president’s early attempts to build momentum for change. He gives him an A-. Even the president is accountable to the people.

In other cultures, leaders are not held accountable for performance. They enjoy great social status and command dignity and respect. Those without power depend them for their own welfare and security and seem to be content with their different status. Leaders rule without having to endure the endless questioning of their authority even though they may not be insensitive to the concerns of those they lead. There seems to be a great distance between those in power and those who live under their authority. This “power distance” plays out in families: children are taught to respect their parents and to obey without questioning. It plays out in schools: students are expected to treat their teachers with respect and accept their authority. It plays out in organizations including churches: hierarchy in organizations is thought to reflect a natural order of things. Leaders are expected to tell subordinates what to do. Initiative by subordinates may, therefore, be seen as subversive. Assuming that all persons are equal in such a cultural setting is naïve. Contrary to Western notions of equality, social inequality may be seen as desirable.

Mapping Power Distance

To understand the degree of expected social inequality and power difference endorsed by a community, anthropologists and cross-cultural researchers use the term “power distance.” The following table gives you an idea of the main differences between high and low power distance societies as described by Hofstede. The recent GLOBE study involving over 1000 researchers has added even more insights into the geography of power in the world (House 2004, Chhokar 2006).
### Hofstede’s Power Distance Index

Hofstede’s power distance index indicates that countries like Malaysia, Guatemala, Philippines, Mexico, and Arab countries value *high power distance* practices. Austria, Israel, the Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the USA value *low power distance*. The more recent GLOBE study was not as conclusive.

### Implications for Missionaries

What are the implications of power distance differences for missionaries? This is a question I am grappling with and need your help with. Power distance reflects deeply held values of a society that may differ from the values of our culture of origin. For instance, high power distance cultures may not value the practices of shared leadership, and accountability for results, expected in low power distance countries. Instead, they may expect their leaders to be conscious of their status and privilege while being caring and benevolent towards those they lead. Before we condemn the practices of other cultures we may want to heed the advice of Duane Elmer who suggests in his book *Cross-cultural Servanthood* (2006) that before we rush to conclusions we may have to first be willing to step out of our comfort zone and open ourselves to others, accept them as they are, build trust, learn not only about them but with them and from them, in order to truly understand them.

When we have truly opened ourselves up to learning their ways and understanding their reasons, the question of how to express the heart of a servant as a leader is more relevant than ever for a church that is a truly global church. How do Biblical principles inform how we lead in cultures that value low power distance practices? How do they inform how we lead in high power distance cultures? These are questions that need answers. As cross-cultural workers you have a unique vantage point that allows you to participate in what you observe. I am very interested to hear from you and read your stories and observations. Have you come to a place where you are able to also critique your own assumptions? What have you observed that seems to work or not work? What has given you joy or caused you grief? I am collecting stories that illustrate leadership and its relationship to authority and power in different places. Feel free to contact me at baumgart@andrews.edu.

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