Leadership development

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF CHURCH LEADERS AND PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR HOLISTIC GROWTH & BALANCE

The Trend Toward Integration of Spirituality and Leadership  
by Stanley E. Patterson, PhD.

My first visit to the annual International Leadership Association Conference was in October of last year in Boston, Massachusetts, USA (the next is in October in London, England). What I discovered was a trend much further advanced than I would ever have imagined. Religion and spirituality was fully integrated into this traditionally secular conference which is dedicated to a “deeper understanding of leadership knowledge and practices for the greater good of individuals and communities worldwide.” Leadership specialists are embracing the reality that leadership is a process that invites, nurtures and leads the spirit of man. The spiritual nature of leadership, both religious and non-religious, is being embraced as a necessary component and has gained a place among the disciplines that have traditionally comprised formal leadership studies. The conference featured one formal presentation on an emerging model referred to as Transcendent Leadership which assumes a natural merging of the spiritual and the scientific in effective leadership in the 21st century.

So what does this trend in leadership studies have to say to those of us called to serve as spiritual leaders in the context of the church? Is it possible that biblical spirituality may be the most significant aspect of leadership effectiveness for the Christian pastor or teacher? The Word has much to say regarding the spiritual component of living but does it specifically address the issue of leadership? What qualifies a person with the title of pastor or Christian teacher as a spiritual leader?

Robert Fryling explains the title of his recent book, The Leadership Ellipse: Shaping How We Lead by Who We Are, by urging that we live our professional or vocational lives around two points—spirituality and leadership rather than one (spirituality) and another (leadership) as though they are separate realms; in doing so our life pattern becomes an ellipse rather than two circles that may or may not intersect. Spirituality is integral to Christian leadership.

The Holy Spirit is the equipper of the church and the source of authentic Christian spirituality. In Romans 12:3-8 the apostle mentions “rule” or “lead” as one of the unique competencies given by the Holy Spirit to certain

“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. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 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. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 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.” Romans 12:3-8

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ones in the church but does that indicate that only those with the specific gift of leading or ruling are able to contribute to the process of leadership? Actually leading is presented as only one of many competencies granted to the Church. The gifts in each of the three passages dedicated to spiritual competencies are embedded in a discussion of unity and oneness. The metaphor of the Body would suggest an interdependent organism of parts and systems that function in a coordinated and sympathetic manner toward the end of healthy and productive behaviour. As such, leadership names the integrated process of all competencies rather than just the output of a few that have the gift or gifts necessary to positional leading.

As such, spiritual leadership is something that every member contributes to though some do so in a highly visible manner while others contribute with little or no visibility. The Holy Spirit is the source of our individual and collective competence in pursuing the mission of the church.

But the necessary components of leadership, whether spiritual or not, reach beyond competence and embrace attitude and character as well. All three passages that address the spiritual nature of gifts (competencies) embed the topic in a context of Christ-like behaviour. The prime characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit recorded in Galatians 5:22 are addressed in Romans 12 where Paul mingles character related behaviours with the spiritual competencies and concludes the chapter from verse 9 onward with counsel regarding behaviour that gives evidence of the Fruit of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and all of chapter 13 provide a spiritual character context for the practice of these competencies. Finally, Ephesians 4:1-6 provides a similar preface to the presentation of the spiritual competencies and follows them with a pointed discussion of the need for spiritual behaviour as we practice them.

The two essential elements of spiritual leadership are both provided by the grace of the Spirit of God—Gifts for competency and Fruit for Christ-like character. Added to these two components is the active presence of spiritual authority. The Gospel Commission offers spiritual authority to every believer as the necessary empowerment that enables all to lead in the context of their unique spiritual giftedness. These three elements are available as part of the providence of God for every believer who chooses to walk in the Spirit.

All who lead in the name of Jesus need to capitalize on the availability of all three of these spiritual elements. Our own spiritual growth must be nurtured and refined if we are to emerge as effective leaders. This requires discipline and commitment to the value we place on the centrality of God’s Spirit in our lives and leadership ministry. The spiritual nature revealed in our character provides the vehicle of credibility that carries our competencies into operational ministry. Spiritual behaviour provides a relationally healthy and inviting context that when present maximizes the impact of all ministry efforts. If character fails then the competencies will stand as useless regardless of the education and training that have honed and developed them. Finally, we need the influence of generative authority that comes not from a self-serving heart but from a Spirit-filled desire to leave all people better than we found them. Without these essential spiritual elements we are left with an impotent presence that lacks effectiveness. Holistic biblical spirituality is being sought by many outside of our community of faith and is our only qualification as spiritual leaders.

1 http://www.ila-net.org/
5 Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: Ephesians 4:6-16.
6 Matthew 28:18-20

Raising funds in hair raising times
by Victor Pilmoor

Almost every news bulletin adds to the economic anxiety of church leaders and those they serve. For those who depend on the faithfulness and generosity of hard pressed members, these are delicate times. In response our members are in greater need of encouragement, spiritual fortitude and compassion.

When the public are content with their disposable income, donors may be less discerning. When resources are restricted even the privileged become more objective and cautious. People become more sensitive to perceived extravagance and waste, they notice high profile equipment, questionable travel and perks. Prudence and discreteness become the order.

It seems to me that the fundamentals of fundraising and stewardship don’t change, they just become more important. So what do we really need to know?

i) People are committed to life transforming objectives. They want to change their lives and those they love for the better. They are not motivated by the survival of an organisation. Speak always of changed lives.
Structural Considerations:

If you haven’t done the basics when times were good you ought not to expect miracles when times are hard. Economic shortage is not a good reason to become interested in Stewardship. We should not infer blame or faithlessness on our members. Now is the time to build loyalty, create vision and demonstrate care. Most significant projects have a lead time of 5 - 10 years so there is no better time to start.

If your relationship is strong and you have built financial reserves it may be a time of opportunity. There are more people with time to volunteer, contractors are eager for work, there are more properties available and interest rates are low.

To Think About...

Leadership and the Fruit of the Spirit

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*  Galatians 5:22-23

Probably the most memorable verses in Galatians are those that list the “fruit of the Spirit.” Fruit grows from planted seeds. Every leader should embrace this marvellous list of inward qualities. Evaluate yourself against them:

- **Love**—Is my leadership motivated by love for people?
- **Joy**—Do I exhibit an unshakable joy, regardless of life’s circumstances?
- **Peace**—Do people see my peace and take courage?
- **Longsuffering**—Do I wait patiently for results as I develop people or goals?
- **Kindness**—Am I caring and understanding toward everyone I meet?
- **Goodness**—Do I want the best for others and the organisation?
- **Faithfulness**—Have I kept my commitments?
- **Gentleness**—Is my strength under control? Can I be both tough and tender?
- **Self-Control**—Am I disciplined to make progress toward my goals?

If you are romantic enough, think of fund raising like courting. The precocious usually get their face slapped, but those who demonstrate patience, deep care, tender love, and concern eventually earn the right to the bride’s hand. No matter how charming you are, you will still need the courage to ‘ask’ on bended knee.

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