

ESSENTIALS FOR LEADERS

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INTRODUCTION

1. Fifteen to twenty percent of the population are leaders, because they were born that way naturally or as believers God has gifted them in order to fulfill key roles in his Kingdom.
2. Twenty percent of the population are just not qualified to lead in either secular or sacred arenas.
3. However, the sixty percent of the people in between the two twenty percents are often called upon to take up leadership roles, function as leaders, or for a period of time be a leader.
4. These individuals in the sixty percent category need to know what is essential to be an effective leader in order to live and behave well in the role they are called to fulfill.
5. The people of God includes both leaders and followers. Therefore, spiritual characteristics are necessary for leaders and followers but they in and of themselves do not make one a leader.
6. Therefore, assuming one is spiritual and one is called upon to be a leader without having the inbred talent or spiritual gifting, that person needs to know what is essential for effective leadership. Knowing what is essential enables a person in a leadership position to develop as a leader in order to maximize their current stewardship.
7. Also, if leaders can articulate the essentials of leadership they can more effectively develop disciples into better leaders. Such knowledge enhances their ability to raise up and train future leaders.

PASSION

1. The heart of all effective leadership begins with passion. Not all passionate people are leaders but all good leaders are passionate.

2. In the spiritual world passion comes from God and his work in our lives. It comes from seeing God as he is, seeing ourselves appropriately as we view God, and seeing the need humanity faces because of its relationship to God. Such images do the following:

- Break us of our self-sufficiency, convincing us of our need of grace
- Enable us to see the great need humans have that can only be met by grace
- Create a righteous indignation about the role of the Evil One
- Put a fire in our innermost being that initiates a stewardship for action

3. Passion is really a prophetic sense of burden that can only be lifted as we mobilize people to meet the desperate spiritual condition other human beings experience. We function because there is a sense of urgency.

4. Passion is the basis for our calling, not a pathological sense of need to help others because of our inadequate experiences in life. Our call needs to come from a “fire in the belly” that motivates us to do anything to meet the great need caused by people having been spiritually kidnapped by the Evil One.

5. Passion motivates us to risk, trust, and attempt great things for the right reasons:

- Moses: It got him from sheep in the desert to confronting Pharaoh.
- Joshua and Caleb: They said forget the giants let’s take the land.
- Gideon: He became a committed coward and did what was needed.
- Esther: Risked death to save her people.
- Habakkuk: Spoke judgment on himself and his nation because God said “trust me.”
- Mary: She gave birth to a perceived illegitimate baby because of her faith.

- Jesus: He set his face like a flint towards Jerusalem, knowing he would die

6. I must be clear about my mission. Once I know my mission I must ask if it is worth my sacrifice. (In North America, sacrifice means my job and all the security that goes with it). If it is worth it, then it is passion that causes me to pursue with spiritual doggedness and mobilize others to join me.

7. My passion for ABCW is helping congregations transform and then reproduce new congregations in order to fulfill the Great Commission. Those who want to do this will receive our help; those who do not will be ignored. This means standing by those (pastors, lay leaders, region staff etc.) committed to this mission and if need be taking flack for them so they can get on with the mission. It means bringing needed resources to those accomplishing the mission in as many ways as possible.

8. The miracle God is continuing to bring to ABCW through transforming congregations and reproducing congregations produces a stewardship for the church worldwide. My passion is to see what God is doing here happening in other congregations and denominations.

COURAGE

1. I am convinced that real courage originates in passion. If we believe the cause is important enough, the need big enough, and the urgency crucial enough, we will go beyond our own concerns for security to act in ways that will enhance the accomplishment of the mission.

2. The Church of Jesus Christ in North America and most congregations that comprise the Church are filled with people who believe that membership has its privileges. This is due in part to a number of reasons:

- Congregations grow because people are served well and needs are met.

- The relational basis between an individual and the congregation is founded upon a consumer mentality that believes in bipartisan contractual agreements.
- The cultural and theological belief that the congregation exists for those who are already members.
- Controlling individuals who see their role and as maintaining the status quo.
- These people usually get their significance from having this role.

3. Turning the cultural of the congregation from inward (membership has its privileges) to outward (serving those who are not yet apart of the congregation) takes significant courage which comes from a passion for reaching lost people.

- This kind of congregational transformation deals with systemic change.
- Changing a congregation is only worth the effort if the change is systemic.

4. Leading systemic change means the creation of significant stress. Pastors and lay leaders who attempt this will be attacked both professionally and personally. The attacks often go beyond the person to the person's family.

5. Pastors unwilling to lose their positions and lay leaders unwilling to lose friends will probably not see systemic change take place.

FLEXIBILITY

1. We are living in a world of continual and rapid change where the pace of change is increasing daily. In North America we have moved from living in an industrial culture to an informational culture. We are all impacted daily by events that are totally out of our control, and which occur both within our nation and around the world.

2. Most congregations have traditionally found change difficult. That problem is becoming exaggerated as the pace of change increases.

3. Leaders today must be extremely clear about what is absolute and what is not. They must also have a laser focus on the mission and vision of the group they are leading. Such clarity then allows them to make rapid changes in strategies and tactics to enable the group to be effective in accomplishing its mission and achieving its vision.

4. I see great variety in the nature of congregations, the personalities of the leaders, and the ways leaders lead congregations to reach the individual micro-cultures in which each congregation exists.

5. Such variety demands flexibility. What worked today will probably not work tomorrow. Flexibility means the leader has the ability to jettison the effective-but-now-ineffective strategies and tactics that produced great fruit a year or two ago.

6. Just watching our region morph and change its efforts in congregational reproduction affirms all that I am saying about flexibility. We make changes after each new church plant because what worked two years ago may not be effective next month.

MISSIONAL

1. The Church of Jesus Christ was designed by its founder to effectively challenge the work, intention, and kingdom of the Evil One. The Church at its heart and soul is missional.

2. The Church in North America has created a whole subculture that is designed to be a refuge from the World for believers. Missional leaders see their congregations as mission outposts making advances into the territory of the Enemy rather than safe harbors to escape the influence of the Enemy. This means that all pastors and lay leaders committed to their leader see themselves as missionaries.

3. Such leaders possess dual vision seeing the present world of their congregation and the future world of where God wants their congregation to be. Pastors see their role as

leading sheep that need food, protecting, encouragement, along with training and development in order to engage the Enemy, whom the Bible describes as a roaring lion. These leaders live with an unceasing relentlessness that will never be fulfilled until the Enemy is defeated.

4. Missional leaders think strategically knowing that God has called them to mobilize the congregation to implement strategies and tactics that will accomplish the mission.

5. These leaders spend time analyzing the micro-culture in which the congregation exists in order to determine best how to unlock the cultural keys that will enable the congregation to make significant gains in reaching those within the culture.

6. Missional leaders are ruthless about accountability since it enables them to know how resources are being deployed either effectively or ineffectively to reach goals.

7. Missional leaders understand that it is their responsibility to influence followers to achieve the mission. This only occurs as they constantly articulate a great urgency that is answered with a clear and compelling vision. A great vision produces risk takers.

WISDOM

1. Passionate, courageous, flexible, and missional leaders who have poor self-awareness and who see missions designed for personal gain are quite dangerous. Great Biblical leaders were passionate, courageous, flexible, and missional but they were also wise.

2. Wisdom is the ability to incorporate, assimilate, and synthesize Biblical knowledge with human experience to produce spiritual behavior that is balanced, complete, and honoring to God.

3. Wise leaders understand the demands of their God upon them, their lives, and the lives of the people they lead. They also understand the

times and how God wants to reach people in the present time in order for God to accomplish His mission through them and the people they lead.

4. Wise leaders view the World through the prism of God's Word. They understand that since the Fall God has functioned as a missionary God reconciling the World back to Himself.

5. Such knowledge informs the job description of spiritual leaders. They are missional because their God is missional. They also never ask of the sheep they are leading more than they themselves are willing to do and risk.

6. Wise leaders have insight into their own selves and lives. As leaders they have strong egos, but most of the time they allow the Spirit of God to put His proper choke hold on their egos in order to allow God to accomplish His work through them. At the same time they do not accept the Christian cultural ideals based upon false piety that gut the essence of true leadership. They understand that servant leadership means serving my Master first, His mission second, and then serving the sheep I am leading by helping them accomplish Leader's mission. As a leader I cannot enter into codependent relationships with the sheep. Neither can I serve sheep that do not want to accomplish my Master's mission.

POSITIVE

1. Spiritual leaders really believe they are going to win because they have the right leader (Jesus Christ) themselves and are on the right team. They also believe in the work of the sanctification and therefore believe that most of the Leader's sheep want to serve their leader well.

2. Positive leaders do not lead by compulsion (guilt) but by compassion. They expect the best from their followers. Therefore, they treat their followers that way.

3. Positive leaders understand that success and winning is determined by the implementation of

strategies that result in a fulfilled mission and vision.

RESPONSIBILITY

1. Leaders today do not blame others if the mission is not accomplished. Good leaders take responsibility for that which occurs good or bad.

2. Leaders are not open to excuses. The three major excuses are:

- It can't happen here – This is the environmental excuse.
- It can't happen because of a lack of commitment – This is the personal excuse.
- It can't happen because God does not want it to. – This is the spiritual excuse.

3. Leaders see the environmental excuse as the missionary challenge not an excuse. They see the personal excuse as the visionary challenge not an excuse. And they see the spiritual excuse as the challenge of denial, not a spiritual excuse.

4. However, all excuses are really leadership challenges. Real leaders accept these challenges and defeat the excuses. If that does not happen they are willing to admit that it was their fault as leaders.

CONCLUSION

1. There is a temptation to say that I cannot lead since I do not have the talents, the gifts or the personality. That may be the case. However, if I am in a position of leadership and feel this way I have two choices: Either step down from that position or begin to practice the essentials of leadership despite my personal wiring.

2. As a leader, with whatever wiring God has given me, I still need to practice the essentials of leadership to be a good leader. I must constantly be evaluating myself to see if the essentials listed here are true of me. I believe that if such is the case, I will be a good effective leader.

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