

Transformational Leaders—Introduction

There are misunderstandings about leadership. The Church is often going down the wrong road in terms of leadership today.

Session I: *A Vision for Transformational Leadership: How much must we change our lenses?*

Hypothesis: The church both yearns for and resists effective leadership, particularly leadership that is transformational in nature, i.e. transformational leadership.

- There is a concern about the language of *entrepreneurial leaders* and *adaptive leadership*, because we use these terms without knowing what they mean.
- People tend to think that entrepreneurial leaders can save the church and take us back to past glory, but God does not take us backward.
- Visions of transformation are attached to old packaging, but people want to know how the church is the church in the world.
- There is concern about thinking that our best days are in the future; we have a lot of creative work to do now.
- Are God's best days in the past or in the future? If we think future, we need to rethink how we are going to continue to be the church in that future.
- Managers manage complexities of budget, buildings, etc. Church leaders need to nurture, lead, develop, and empower spiritual leaders. We tend to look for leaders who can save.
- On the other hand, we really do not want leaders who will lead us to change. We want to keep things the way they are—no matter how painful or ineffective they might be.
- Are we willing for our norms, behaviors, and attitudes to change? Can we give up power, privilege, and status (quo)?
- We need to change our lenses to the perspective of followers.

Starting point:

- The Church needs leaders who try to appeal to followers vs. followers who want to follow people whom they make leaders.
- We are talking about followers who yearn to be transformed by God.

Focus on followers:

- Why do we want to be transformed? How? When? By Whom? What do we hope will be different during the process of transformation and at the end of it?
 - Why do we NOT want to be transformed? Why? When? By whom? What do we want to keep the same?
 - Whom do we want, and whom will we allow, to lead us?
 - Those who invest in us.
 - Those who listen to us and guide us through discernment
 - Those who are humble
 - Those who cause us to look deeper within ourselves, but do not allow us to stay there.
- KEY: Followers choose for themselves who they will follow, often without the "leader" recognizing it.**
- Common threads among leaders we will follow.
 - They come into our lives at deeply formative times
 - They ask deep probing questions.

- Address us at times when we are at critical point of change.
 - They let us go when we are ready to move out on our own.
 - Following is personal. There has to be a personal dynamic.
 - Who have been your leaders?
 - Who have you followed over the course of your life?
 - Who are you following now?
 - If you are not following anyone now, what might be the reasons?
- Key: Leaders do not lead organizations. They lead people *within* organizations.**
- Whom can we trust?
 - Credibility
 - Authenticity (whole life is integrated in beliefs)
 - The importance of “heart”
 - Passion for what he or she believes
 - Vision
 - Skills
 - Leadership as relationship—the critical role of the follower (particularly during moments of vulnerability)
 - Awareness of an end-point (can we still be leaders if no one is currently following us?)

[Sidebar: Ken proposed a new curriculum on what it means to be transformational followers.]

Including: Purposes of Education

Roles of teachers and learners in the processes of transformation, following and leading

A Vision for transformation:

- De-center our hyper-focus and exaggerated attention on transformational leaders to focusing on the presence and power of God
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Table Discussion: What are some of your visions?

Teachers are leading learners. Once they stop learning, they are no longer in a position to try to teach others.

Look at the YouTube video *Dancing Guy*, a shirtless person who goes up on a hillside and starts dancing and, gradually, more and more people join him.

Instill in parents the idea that they are the most important religious leaders in the lives of their children. Faith formation is best done in the home where it can be incorporated into daily life—not something left as an *optional* Sunday activity.

Teachers are not just *experts* but people who are actively learning, too. They are people who can be with a group (or individual) and invite them to look at a text/situation and interpret it for themselves, not just tell them what it means. Part of that process is teaching people how to reflect theologically.

Session II: Educating Transformational Leaders: What Are We Willing to Change?

Re-considering how we educate transformational leaders

- Helping people learn how to follow
- Helping people think about whom they might follow and why
- Helping followers learn how to respond to a desire from other followers to begin to lead
- Helping emerging leaders understand what they hold “in trust”

An Experiential Approach—David Kolb

Dimensions of learning: (Similar to the CPE process)

- Concrete experience
- Reflective Observation
- Abstract Conceptualization
- Active Experimentation

Discussion: A Memory: When you first chose to follow another person

- What was the situation in which this occurred?
- What was your hope in following this other person?
- What was it about him or her that opened you to following their lead?
- How did the story unfold?

Discussion: A second memory: When you later chose to follow another person

- What was the situation in which this occurred?
- What was your hope in following this other person?
- What was it about him or her that opened you to following their lead?
- How did the story unfold?
- How did the first memory shape—or have an impact upon—your capacity to follow another person in this story?

Reason for the discussions about our history of following is to help us reflect and understand the situations under which we were willing to follow and how following others has influenced us.

The Invitation to Follow—the Desire to Follow (Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 9:57-62)

Interesting to do word searches through Bible, Book of Order, Book of Confession of word forms of *leader*, *disciple* and *follow*. We will find that the greatest emphasis is on following.

Reflection on the Passages

- Where do you perceive that those engaging Jesus were at deeply formative times in their life?
- How do you imagine they faced questions of identity?
- Where do you see their vulnerability?
- Where do you perceive the hopeful anticipation of potential followers?

Imagine a Church Officer Development Retreat

- What might you focus upon?
- How might you help them to understand what other followers want and need from them?
- What might you want to offer to help develop the skills of church officers?
 - Knowledge
 - Skills
 - Personal and spiritual formation

- Contextual awareness

What might happen if you reversed the order of the first three above?

Some reflections

- Leadership is complex. We often do leadership a disservice by over-simplifying it. We often try to simplify it when we are looking for a quick fix.
- If we are to be effective leaders, we must first be effective and faithful followers.
- Educators and education play a critical role in nurturing followers and leaders.
- Followers and leaders all begin as apprentices.
- We are more open to change, and willing to change, when our sense of urgency outweighs our sense of complacency.
- If we only want to sustain current models, we are in trouble.

Needed conversations

Necessary role of curiosity

Discussion about confirmation curriculum

How do we connect the dots between what we believe and how we live?