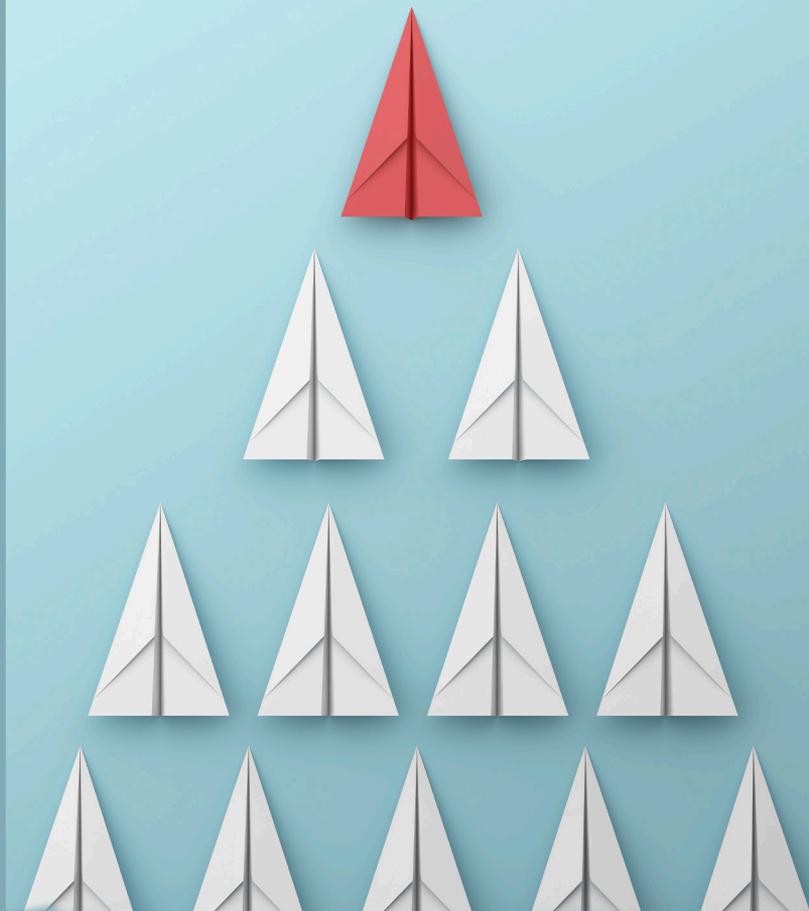


LEAD



Leadership Essentials for
Navigating Challenging Times

Dr. Winfield Bevins

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Navigating Challenging Times*

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Outline

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Introduction

Being a leader isn't what it used to be. We are living in challenging and uncertain times where leaders need support and encouragement to help them learn to navigate the world we are in. We live in a strange world where things like pandemics and protests seem to be the new norm. Since 2020, the world has radically changed and will continue to change in the days ahead. Andy Crouch, Kurt Keilhacker, and Dave Blanchard describe the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic as an economic and cultural blizzard; winter; and the beginning of a "little ice age— a once-in-a-lifetime change that is likely to affect our lives and organizations for years."¹ One thing is for certain; we live in a different world than we did a few months ago, and things may never return to the way they were.

COVID-19 is just the tip of the iceberg that today's leaders face. In the new reality, we face issues of race, divisive politics, outrage, the rise of the religious nones, as well as global, environmental, and economic uncertainty. Some have even gone so far as to refer to the times we are living in the "new dark ages."² One thing is for sure; we live in a different world than we did a few months ago and things probably will never go back to the way they were.

If truth be told, many leaders find themselves at a loss in times of crisis. In the midst of these radical changes and challenges, we need courageous leaders and churches who are willing to reimagine and embrace the future possibilities of the church. As we look at the history of the church, we see that the church has survived more difficult situations than we are currently facing. Whether in persecution or pandemics, the church has not only survived, but thrived in difficult and challenging times. Such are the times we are living in.

In the next few pages, I want to offer several leadership essentials that I believe will help you navigate the present-future realities of the world we are living in. Whoever you are, wherever you are called to serve, I pray this book will help encourage you as you seek to faithfully proclaim the life giving gospel of Jesus Christ afresh to this generation.

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Chapter 1

Hopeful Leadership

“What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life.”

-Emil Brunner

In many parts of the world, the church is in crisis, and it is in rapid decline throughout most of the Western world. This crisis is widespread and has been going on for quite some time. It can be traced back to the rise of secularism and the collapse of Christendom in Western Europe – the shock waves of which are still being felt. If the church is going to have a future, it will need healthy missional leaders. So, what are the marks that are needed for missional leaders to navigate the uncertain future of the church and world?

Many Christians have either resorted to a “gloom and doom” outlook or are simply pretending that nothing has changed. However, there is another way to look at the future: we need a realistic hope.² Megan Hyatt Miller reminds us, “Leaders require an accurate picture of the facts, but they also need to have confidence they can overcome even the worst news. That’s realistic. And hopeful.”³ We do not have to be pessimistic or optimistic — we can find realistic hope that is rooted in Christ, because he is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Being hopeful doesn’t mean that we stick our head in the sand and ignore the realities and challenges around us, or that we give up on the world; rather, it means that we look in the face of our challenging circumstances with a realistic hope that comes from God.

Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus Christ is the greatest example of realistic hope. Jesus Christ knows our pain, struggles, sorrow, and our joy. The good news of the gospel is that God is with us in our pain. The Bible never says that times of adversity and suffering will not arise in our lives. But it does assure us that, even in the midst of trials, suffering, and sorrow the Scriptures say that, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalms 46:1, NIV) This Biblical passage affirms that God is always with us in the midst of our times of greatest need. We see that He does not always remove difficulties and trials from our path, but in His sovereignty He is present with us in order to help us in our hour of need. Even in our time of sorrow and pain this text tells us that He is our refuge and strength, which means that He is the One who shelters us and enables us to make it through the difficult seasons of our lives.

Like Jesus Christ who embodied God’s mission in his very life and

death, we are called to participate in God's ministry of healing and restoration by being present to others who are suffering with the same presence that God has given to us. In a way God becomes present to them through us. In the words of Henri Nouwen, "Nobody can offer leadership to anyone unless he makes his presence known- that is, unless he steps forward out of the anonymity and apathy of his milieu and makes the possibility of fellowship visible."⁴ We see here that we are not alone in our sufferings, but God is the one who is always there whether it be through the presence of another, a simple memory, or by the sweet presence of the Holy Spirit. Comfort comes through presence, and we are called to share in the ministry of presence with others.

For me, the cross of Christ is the sign of our mission in the world. Christians should live cross-centered lives. Believers are saved by the Gospel and called to live by the Gospel. "Never forget" is a slogan that some people use to remember the death of a loved one or a close friend. As Christians, we should never forget what Christ has done for us on the cross of Calvary. To put it simply we are people of the cross. The cross is the universal symbol of Christianity. We are reminded of the Cross every time we come to the Eucharist or stand before a cross. Not everyone will understand or receive the message of the cross. In fact, in some countries even wearing a cross is controversial and in some cases is the cause of persecution. But for all Christians, this symbol remains as a source of hope and comfort. Therefore, let us never forget the cross.

Not only did Jesus die on a cross, but he was also resurrected. The resurrection reminds us that hope is at the very heart of the Christian message. Peter reminds us, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (I Peter 1:3, NIV).

We are Easter people. When most people think of Easter they think about a holiday dedicated to the Easter bunny and colored eggs. As with many holidays (or "Holy Days"), this is a modern distortion of the original celebration. In fact, the truth of Easter is all about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter reminds us that "Christ is Risen!" and recognizes God's ongoing work of establishing new creation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also celebrates the hope of that work being culminated in a new heaven and a new earth. N.T. Wright aptly claims, "The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and that you're now invited to belong to it."^{xxii} The resurrection of Jesus Christ is an essential key to the Christian message of hope.

In the movie *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, the leaders of the rebellion were facing overwhelming odds against them when the main character, Jyn Erso, reminded them, "We have hope. Rebellions are built

on hope." If you think about it, Christianity was a rebellion that was built on hope. In the midst of war, persecution, or pandemic, hope is what has sustained the church throughout the ages.

Let me close with one of my favorite verses, Romans 15:13 in *The Message Bible* says, "May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!" Leaders of the future must have a realistic hope.

Chapter 2

Emotional Health

“Almost all problems in the spiritual life stem from a lack of self-knowledge.”

-St. Teresa of Avila

More than ever before, we need emotionally healthy leaders. Over the past decade, statistics have revealed that many Christian leaders are burned out. Some have committed moral failures. Others have simply walked away from the ministry.⁵ For this reason, I have been teaching on leadership burnout over the last decade. This is one of the main reasons why I have written this book, not just help leaders survive, but to help them thrive in the new normal.

One of the primary reasons for burnout is that too many leaders are emotionally unhealthy. In his book *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Peter Scazzero says, “The emotionally unhealthy leader is someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a ‘being with God’ sufficient to sustain their ‘doing for God.’”⁶ In contrast, an emotionally healthy leader is one who leads “from a deep and transformed inner life.”⁷ Healthy leadership involves attending to our inner life and knowing ourselves as well as knowing God.

Sadly, too many Christian leaders around the world lack emotional health. According to Peter Scazzero, emotional health is concerned with such things as:

- naming, recognizing, and managing our own feelings;
- identifying with and having active compassion for others;
- initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships;
- breaking free from self-destructive patterns;
- being aware of how our past impacts our present;
- developing the capacity to express our thoughts and feelings clearly;
- respecting and loving others without having to change them;
- asking for what we need, want, or prefer clearly, directly, and respectfully;
- accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits, and weaknesses and freely sharing them with others;
- learning the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspectives of others;
- Distinguishing and appropriately expressing our spirituality with our sexuality and sensuality;
- grieving well.⁸

The key task of an emotionally healthy Christian is the “knowledge of God and of ourselves.”⁹ Knowing ourselves is sometimes referred to as emotional intelligence. This does not pertain to our cognitive intelligence but is another kind of “smart”: our *emotional* intelligence. This emotional intelligence reflects the capability of individuals to recognize and use their own emotional information to manage and adapt to various environments in order to achieve success. Rather than focusing on your ability to perform tasks, emotional intelligence probes the depths of identity to ensure that at your very core, you possess the character, stamina, and adaptability to succeed as a leader.

In the words of Drs. Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, “Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships.”¹⁰ They believe that emotional intelligence affects how we govern our behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results.

Another very important key to emotional health is what Edwin Friedman called “differentiation” in his book, *A Failure of Nerve*. Differentiation is essential because it involves the ability to remain connected to people, yet not have your reaction or behaviors determined by them. Friedman says, “a well-differentiated leader is less likely to become lost in the anxious emotional processes swirling about. I mean someone who can separate while still remaining connected and, therefore, can maintain a modifying, non-anxious, and sometimes challenging presence.”¹¹ Emotionally healthy leaders have the ability to calmly differentiate themselves from the demands and voices around them. In the challenging times we are living in, what could be more needed in a leader today?

Over the years one of the things that has helped me the most is the Serenity Prayer. There is a stereotype that the Serenity Prayer is just for alcoholics, but it’s for all of us no matter who we are or what our struggles may be in life.

The Serenity Prayer is a profoundly simple and beautiful prayer that reminds us that we need to always rely on the grace of God one day at a time, one moment at a time. I want to encourage you to take sometime to pray it, memorize it, live by it, and share it with others.

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;

Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.
Amen.

Chapter 3

Spiritual Formation

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."
-St. Augustine

More than ever before, Christians need to rediscover holistic practices for spiritual formation that will sustain them for mission in today's world. Christianity is not just a set of doctrines to be affirmed but a way of life that is meant to be lived. The earliest Christians were known simply as "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 18:25; 22:4; 24:14). They were known as "the Way" because they followed the way of Jesus. We need to rediscover an ancient way of being a Christian that brings together worship, formation, and mission. We call this "missional spirituality" because it connects spiritual practices with missional practices.

Just as breathing is essential to the physical body, so the Christian life requires a spiritual breathing. Breathing is a beautiful analogy of the Christian life that reminds us that our mission is directly connected to our spirituality. Mission isn't just doing something *for* God, but begins and ends with being *with* God. In their book, *Worship and Mission After Christendom*, Alan and Eleanor Kreider say the Church needs to both inhale in worship and exhale by going into the world and sharing the Good News; making peace; and caring for creation, reconciliation, and the marginalized of society.¹² In missional spirituality, "inhaling" and "exhaling" are two essential and interconnected movements of living the way of Jesus in the world.

This balance of worship and mission is especially important for missional leaders today. Even doing good things like ministry and mission can be a distraction if we don't allow time for rest. After the disciples returned from a busy missionary journey, Jesus told them to "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). They had been busy and Jesus knew that they needed rest for their weary souls. Spiritual burnout occurs when we don't give ourselves time to rest from our daily routine. We believe that the secret of Jesus' ministry can be found in this balance of worship, prayer and mission. Henri Nouwen offers the following meditation on the balance of the spiritual life and ministry of Jesus.

"In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there." In the middle of sentences loaded with action – healing suffering people, casting

out devils, responding to impatient disciples, traveling from town to town and preaching from synagogue to synagogue – we find these quiet words: “In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there.” In the center of breathless activities we hear a restful breathing. Surrounded by hours of moving we find a moment of quiet stillness. In the heart of much involvement there are words of withdrawal. In the midst of action there is contemplation. And after much togetherness there is solitude. The more I read this nearly silent sentence locked in between the loud words of action, the more I have the sense that the secret of Jesus’s ministry is hidden in that lonely place where he went to pray, early in the morning, long before dawn.¹³

We also see this illustrated in the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his word, but Martha was distracted with much serving. Jesus said that Mary had chosen the best thing because she sat at his feet and was not distracted. Resting in the Lord is the only way that we can continue to have an effective Christian life because our *being* must come before our *doing*. Times of rest and retreat enable us to listen to the still, small voice of God.

Several years ago, I (Winfield) went through a difficult season wherein I felt spiritually exhausted and close to burning out in ministry. Like Bilbo Baggins in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, I felt “thin, sort of stretched, like butter scraped over too much bread.”¹⁴ My faith had not adequately prepared me for this experience. During this season of life, God helped me slow down and recover my faith by embracing spiritual rest and retreat. Jesus invites each one of us to come and find our rest in him. Think on the following words from Matthew’s Gospel:

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly. (Matthew 11:28-30, *The Message*)

Never before has there been such a need to rediscover missional spirituality. It is essential that we allow time during each day for spiritual rest and solitude from all of the busy distractions of our complex world. If we are not careful, the multitude of distractions of this world will keep us from finding rest for our souls. Our souls need to have scriptural rest in the same way that our physical bodies need rest; otherwise, we will ex-

perience spiritual burnout. God promises rest to his people. The biblical word for rest literally means a resting place, a quiet place, peace, trust, and reliance. Rest is the reason why God commanded us to keep the Sabbath. Jesus said that the Sabbath was created so that man may have rest.

Finally, the ultimate fruit of spiritual formation is not retreat from the world, but missional engagement with the world. Robert Mulholland reminds us that , "Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others."¹⁵ This definition of spiritual formation reminds us that the telos or goal of our own formation as missional leaders is for the sake of others. To be a Christian leader is to be a part of a missionary movement that has a long and rich heritage of spiritual formation.

Chapter 4

Contemplative Action

"One of the most important rhythms for a person in ministry is to establish a constant back-and-forth motion between engagement and retreat." -Ruth Haley Barton

Leaders are too often people of action, but rarely men and women of contemplation and prayer. The result is often stress, depression, and burnout. In a world filled with distractions, we need a quiet place where God can speak to us. Many people spend only a few minutes each day reading and meditating on the Bible, and often this is not enough. Sitting and prayerfully meditating on God's Word puts the cares of this world in proper perspective and opens us up to allowing God to speak to us.

Contemplative prayer is important for leaders because even doing a good work for the Lord can be a distraction if we do not allow time to rest. After the disciples returned from a busy missionary journey, Jesus told them to "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). They had been busy, and Jesus knew that they needed rest for their weary souls. Spiritual burnout occurs when we do not give ourselves time to rest from our daily routine.

Contemplative prayer should flow into contemplative action. I want to share two examples. The first example comes to us from a tiny island in northern England. Lindisfarne Island is the site of one of the most important centers of early Christianity in England. In 633 A.D., King Oswald of Northumbria desired to bring Christianity to his kingdom and requested the monks of Iona in Scotland to come and bring Christianity to his people. The first monk who was sent, Cormac, met with little success. He returned to Iona and reported he was unable to minister to the people because they "were ungovernable and of an obstinate and barbarous temperament."¹⁶

Not willing to give up, the monks of Iona had a conference to discuss what they should do next. Aidan, who was at the conference, issued these comments to the failed missionary monk: "Brother, it seems to me that you were too severe on your ignorant hearers. You should have followed the practice of the Apostles, and begun by giving them the milk of simpler teaching, and gradually nourished them with the word of God until they were capable of greater perfection and able to follow the loftier precepts of Christ."¹⁷ This observation by St. Aidan convinced all in attendance that he was the man to continue the failed missionary work in Northumbria.

It was unanimously decided that Aidan would be sent out from Iona to establish Christianity in northern England.

Aidan was consecrated a bishop and arrived in Northumbria around 635 A.D. accompanied by twelve other monks. King Oswald gave him the small island of Lindisfarne (also known as Holy Island) as a home base for his monastic work. Aidan established the monastery on the Island of Lindisfarne that eventually became an epicenter for spirituality and mission for northern England; a "thin place."

Lindisfarne provided both solitude and a base for missionary work, being cut off from the mainland except for twice a day during the periods of low tide. When the tide was in, the island was completely surrounded by water and became a solitary place. When the tide went out, it again was connected to the mainland. This rhythm of the tides coming in and going out formed the spiritual rhythms of the missionary monks on Lindisfarne. The monks would retreat on the island for worship, prayer, and rest, and then carry God's presence back out into mission. Lindisfarne became a center of learning to train missionary monks for Northumbria and eventually helped found other monasteries throughout the region.¹⁸ The monastic missionaries who trained on Lindisfarne went out from there and helped bring the gospel to much of Anglo-Saxon England, especially in northern England.

Such was the spiritual life of the monks who lived on Lindisfarne. Ray Simpson reminds us, "The pattern of outreach and withdrawal, advance and retreat, was another feature of Aidan's, as of Christ's, way of life."¹⁹ The monks of Lindisfarne carried God with them far and wide out of a deep place of rest and delight in God's presence.

A more modern example of contemplative leadership is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr. became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in the American Civil Rights movement. His prophetic words inspired a generation and resulted in legal and social change that empowered black Americans who had been disenfranchised and persecuted for centuries. One evening when he was *ready to give up, he had a deep encounter with God that changed his life. He recounts* this experience in a sermon entitled "*Our God is Able,*" where he tells a very personal story that gave him the strength and courage to continue on with his fight for justice and equality:

The words I spoke to God that midnight are still vivid in my memory. "I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership, and if I stand before them without strength, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I have come to the

point where I can't face it alone." At that moment I experienced the presence of the Divine as I had never experienced him. It seemed as though I could hear the quiet assurance of an inner voice, saying, "Stand up for righteousness, stand up for truth. God will be at your side forever." Almost at once my fears passed from me. My uncertainty disappeared. I was ready to face anything. The outer situation remained the same, but God had given me inner calm.²⁰

These are two beautiful examples of contemplative action. There are many examples of contemplative action throughout history that we could also name, such as Desmond Tutu, who was the spiritual leader of the Apartheid efforts of South Africa and led out of a place of deep contemplative spirituality. Just like breathing, missional spirituality is marked by the ebb and flow of the Christian life. So it should be with us; our mission to the world should flow from a deep well within us, from the very presence of the living God. These practices form the heart of contemplative action.

Chapter 5

Adaptive Leadership

"If you find what you do each day seems to have no link to any higher purpose, you probably want to rethink what you're doing." — Ronald Heifetz

We have already noted that we are living in changing and challenging times. When we look at the Bible we see that God has always called leaders to rise to the challenge with courage. As the nation of Israel was heading into the uncharted territory of the Promised Land, God encouraged Joshua four times to "be strong and very courageous" (Josh. 1:6,7,9,18). Later in Joshua 3:4, God makes it clear to Joshua that "you have never been this way before." Just like Joshua, we live in uncertain times, where many people are struggling to navigate the challenges of the new realities we live in. We are in uncharted territory and have never been this way before. We need courageous leaders who will take us into the Promised Land.

So, what is a courageous leader? According to Harvard Business School Professor Nancy Koehn, "A courageous leader is an individual who's capable of making themselves better and stronger when the stakes are high and circumstances turn against that person. Courageous leaders are not cowed or intimidated. They realize that, in the midst of turbulence, there lies an extraordinary opportunity to grow and rise."²¹ Based on her research, Brené Brown defines courageous and daring leadership as, "the courage to show up when you can't predict the future."²² More than ever before, we need courageous leaders who are willing to lead when they can't foresee the outcome.

Related to courageous leadership is adaptive leadership. In the world we are living in, it is so important to be flexible and adaptable to peoples' needs. Leaders of the future must be able to adapt to rapidly changing environment. Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky define adaptive leadership as the ability of "individuals and organizations to adapt and thrive in challenging environments."²³ The concept of *adaptivity* is an organic concept drawn from biology in which living things adapt to survive.

The Old and New Testaments are also based on an organic worldview. The church is the spiritual and living Body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, it requires numerous systems and structures that work together to fulfill its intended purpose and overall health. Just as the physical

body has to have an organic structure to hold it together while allowing it to grow and develop, likewise the body of Christ must have an organic structure that can do the same.

Leaders need to be able to be flexible and adaptive to the changes that are swirling around us. Leonard Sweet says, "We must develop ministries that continually adjust and change with our continually changing culture."²⁴ In a similar way, leaders need to be both courageous and able to adapt and change to adjust to the ongoing changes and challenges around us or it will hinder our growth.

Chapter 6

Culturally Intelligence

*"We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God."
-John Stott*

More than ever before leaders will have to have a strong cultural intelligence. According to Gary Collins, "Culture might be viewed as a collection of the beliefs, customs, values, and ways of thinking that are common within a group of people. A more formal definition describes culture as a common history, physical environment, and place of living, language, and religion that shapes members of a society so that they develop and share common assumptions, values, beliefs, and worldviews."²⁵ From issues relating to race, gender, and politics, there is a growing need for leaders to develop their "cultural intelligence" – which refers to a person's capacities to understand and effectively respond to the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of others who differ from them.²⁶

To be an effective leader, you will need to be able to learn the skills and develop the ability to understand and appreciate diverse cultures and contexts and be able to work across national, ethnic, and political lines. This will become increasingly essential in our global world. Every context is different, so it is crucial to be able to understand and engage the unique culture and context in the location where you live and work. This begins with your own self-awareness, by listening to others, and by seeking to understand and appreciate the cultural perspective of the person you are leading.

The future of the church is will be globally and ethnically diverse community. In fact, it already is. The past five hundred years of church history has often focused on these European churches and their descendants. Yet as historian Phillip Jenkins has noted, the last one hundred years has seen a new shift in the center of gravity for the Christian movement southward to Africa, Asia, and Latin America.²⁷

Today, the church is growing at an explosive rate throughout the world.²⁸ Consider the following statistics: In 1910, about two-thirds of the world's Christians lived in Europe, where the bulk of Christians had lived for almost a millennium. Today, over one hundred years later, around one in every four Christians lives in sub-Saharan Africa (24%), and about one in eight is found in Asia and the Pacific (13%). The sheer number of Christians around the world has quadrupled in the last hundred years, from

around 600 million in 1910 to more than two billion in 2010. More than 1.3 billion Christians now live in the Global South (61%), compared with about 860 million in the Global North (39%).²⁹ There is much we can learn from the global church by observing what God is doing through these movements.

One example of the effect these shifts are having on the movement of Christianity is in the flow of evangelism from culture to culture. Because of the growth of Christianity in the Global South, the flow of evangelism is beginning to reverse from the direction of the recent past. Whereas Western churches were once sending out missionaries and evangelists to reach churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, today we are seeing believers from these cultures coming to Europe and North America to re-evangelize the Western world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. British author Martin Robinson speaks of missionaries from nations like Brazil, Haiti, Mexico, Nigeria, Dominican Republic, and Ethiopia, to name a few.³⁰ As these shifts continue, churches in the West will need to re-examine their old paradigms and adapt to these new movements of God, perhaps through a humble willingness to learn from our brothers and sisters in the wider global church if we want to see renewal in the West.

The church in the United States must become increasingly diverse if it is going to represent the nation. According to the Census, the USA will become "minority white" by 2045.³¹ That means the future of the church in North America will be increasingly multiethnic and diverse. With more than 337 languages represented, the United States has become the most multicultural and multilingual nation on earth.³²

As the West continues to experience globalization, a growing number of churches are beginning to focus on embracing people from various nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. For instance, in many urban contexts, churches will have to cross racial, cultural, and socioeconomic lines to reach their communities. Culture intelligence points to the beautiful picture promised in Revelation, where people from every nation, tribe, and language praise God in unison with one another.

Chapter 7

Servant Leadership

"The way of the Christian leader is not the way of upward mobility in which our world has invested so much, but the way of downward mobility ending on the cross."

-Henri J.M. Nouwen

As we end this book, I want to remind of the most important leadership lesson of all: being a servant. Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, leaders of the future need to be servants.³³ Unfortunately, our individualistic society has caused us to neglect the need to put others above ourselves. For our culture, serving is revolutionary because it goes against the natural tendency toward self-preservation and elevation. The mind of a servant constantly looks around and asks, "What can I do for others?" instead of, "What can they do for me?" We find this mindset pervading the life of Jesus. He set the ultimate example by living out this verse: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This Scripture beautifully embodies the task of Christian ministry.

The word servant comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, which is the ordinary word for "servant." The basic meaning of Greek word suggests service (John 2:5; Romans 15:8; Matthew 20:26; Luke 10:40; Acts 11:29; 12:25). Christian leaders must strive to be like Jesus, our perfect example. By engaging in faithful servanthood, we, as the Body of Christ, become Christ's representatives to a lost world. The word "servant" can also be translated into "minister." Therefore, to be a Christian leader, whether you are a business person or a pastor, you are called to be a servant. Jesus set the example of being a servant.

Disciples are to follow Jesus' example and to serve and give their lives for others. Serving is the example that Jesus gave and his followers should follow it. Many practical applications can be made directly from the words of Jesus. Jesus says, "Inasmuch as you do to the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." Matthew 25:35-46 describes the call to be a servant in detail. Servant ministry is a call to love others.

The Apostle Paul gives us a beautiful picture of being a servant leader like Christ in Philippians 2: 5-11.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy com-

plete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

As a whole, the Church should be an army of servants who are making a positive difference in their families, community, and world. With a commitment to servant leadership, we are bound to witness a revolution that will transform our communities and demonstrate the love of Christ for the world to see.

I want to end with a quote from Henri Nouwen who reminds us that “a whole new type of leadership is asked for in the church of tomorrow, a leadership that is not modelled on the power games of the world, but on the servant-leader Jesus, who came to give his life for the salvation of many.”³⁴ Nothing could be more critical for missional leadership of today than that. These are but a few of the fundamentals that we believe that leaders will need to navigate the present-future realities in which we live.

End Notes

- 1 Crouch, Andy, Kurt Keilhacker, and Dave Blanchard. "Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup." *The Praxis Journal*, 20 Mar. 2020, <https://journal.praxislabs.org/leading-beyond-the-blizzard-why-every-organization-is-now-a-startup-b7f32fb278ff>.
- 2 See Angela Wilkinson and Betty Sue Flowers, *Realistic Hope: Facing Global Challenges*. Amsterdam University Press, 2018.
- 3 Miller, Megan Hyatt, "Why Hopeful Realism Beats Mandatory Optimism." <https://michaelhyatt.com/hopeful-realism/>
- 4 Henri Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*,
- 5 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lifeway Research revealed that 23 percent of pastors acknowledge they have personally struggled with a mental illness and 49 percent say they rarely or never speak to their congregation about mental illness. Another Lifeway Research study of pastors concluded that 84 percent say they are on-call 24 hours a day and 54 percent find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming. Combined with the COVID-19 pandemic and the massive logistical, relational, and financial pressures our churches are facing, its leaders are facing significant challenges. For more information, visit the newly-formed Resilient Church Leadership Initiative at <https://resilientchurchleadership.com/about>. We would also recommend Jimmy Dodd and PastorServe has written several helpful books for pastors including, *Survive or Thrive: 6 Relationships Every Pastor Needs* (2015) and *Pastors Are People Too: What They Won't Tell You but You Need to Know* (2016). See also, Scott Sauls, *From Weakness to Strength: 8 Vulnerabilities That Can Bring Out the Best in Your Leadership* (2017).
- 6 Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Scazzero, Peter. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. 45.
- 9 Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 1, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957, p. 37. See also David G. Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015.
- 10 Bradberry, Travis and Jean Greaves. *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. San Diego: Talent Smart, 2009, p. 17.
- 11 Friedman, Edwin. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in an Age of the Quick Fix*. New York: Church Publishing, 2007, p. 15.

12 See Alan and Eleanor Kreider, *Worship and Mission After Christendom*.

13 Henri J. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude. Three Meditations on the Christian Life*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2004. 17.

14 Tolkien, John Ronald Reuel. *The Lord of the Rings*. United States: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. 32.

15 M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey. A Road Map For Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993, 12.

16 The earliest and most accurate account of the life and ministry of St. Aidan comes from the British historian Bede (672-735 A.D.) who lived shortly after Aidan's time. Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*. London: Penguin Classics, 1968, p. 149.

17 Ibid.

18 Simpson, Ray, and Brent Lyons-Lee. *St. Aidan Way of Mission. Celtic Insights for a Post-Christian World*. Oxford: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2016 and Smither, Edward L. *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016, pp. 64-81.

19 Simpson and Lyons-Lee, *St. Aidan Way of Mission*, 98.

20 King, Jr., Martin Luther. *Strength to Love*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963, p. 114.

21 Gavin, Matt, "5 Characteristics of a Courageous Leader." *Harvard Business School Online*, 3 Mar. 2020, <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/courageous-leadership>. See also Nancy Koehn, *Forged in Crisis: The Making of Five Courageous Leaders*. New York: Scribner, 2018.

22 Brown, Brené. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work, Tough Conversations, Whole Hearts*. New York: Random House, 2018, p. 20.

23 Cambridge Leadership Associates, <https://cambridge-leadership.com/adaptive-leadership/>.

There are a number of relevant resources that we would recommend for leaders on adaptive leadership. I (Winfield) have been blessed by being coached by J.R. Briggs who coaches and helps leaders at www.kairospartnerships.org and recently wrote *The Sacred Overlap: Learning to Live Faithfully in the Space Between*. See also Tod Bolsinger has two significant books on adaptive leadership including *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (2018) and *Tempered Resilience: How Leaders Are Formed in the Crucible of Change* (2020). See also Martin Linsky and Ron A. Heifetz, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading*, 2002, and Heifetz, Linsky, and

- Alexander Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 2009.
- 24 Sweet, Leonard. *AquaChurch*. Loveland, CO: Group, 1999, p. 8.
- 25 Collins, Gary. *Christian Coaching*. p. 316.
- 26 Littlemore, David. *Cultural Intelligence: Youth, Family, and Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.
- 27 See Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press), 2011.
- 28 For a quick overview of global Christianity see the report, "Status of Global Christianity, 2017, in the Context of 1900–2050" from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/research/documents/StatusofGlobalChristianity2017.pdf>
- 29 Pew Research Center, "Global Christianity – A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population." December 19, 2011. <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>
- 30 Martin Robinson, *Planting Mission-Shaped Churches Today* (Oxford, UK: Monarch Books, 2006), 144.
- 31 See the US Census report: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>.
- 32 George G. Hunter III, *The Recovery of a Contagious Methodist Movement*, 28.
- 33 A number of secular leadership thinkers have recognized the importance of servant leadership. See Simon Sinek, *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*, 2017; Ken Blanchard and Renee Broadwell, *Servant Leadership in Action: How You Can Achieve Great Relationships and Results*, 2018; and Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 25th anniversary ed., 2002.
- 34 Nouwen, Henri. *In the Name of Jesus*. p. 63.