DISCOVERING SERVANT LEADERSHIP

LECTURE TEXTS BY DR. KENT M. KEITH

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to serve as the producer for the New Institute's short course on "Discovering Servant Leadership."

The purpose of the New Institute is to train and mentor leaders in government and politics, business, nonprofits, education, creative industries, and technology. Leaders in all these fields will have the most positive impacts on their colleagues and society at large if they are servant leaders.

We are fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Dr. Kent Keith, who authored and presented these nine lectures. Dr. Keith has studied, taught, and practiced servant leadership for thirty years. He is known throughout the world as an expert. He has given hundreds of talks and workshops on servant leadership, and has authored a number of influential books on the topic.

Dr. Keith has three advanced degrees and has worked in the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors. He brings his academic background and work experience to his teaching and writing. Starting with a strong foundation in Scripture, he addresses practical questions that are important regardless of what kind of organization one is leading in the ministry or the marketplace. The modules in this short course are essentially about how to be a servant leader and apply the principles and practices that make servant leaders so effective.

In preparing the lectures, Dr. Keith drew upon a number of his books and articles on servant leadership. He also incorporated stories that he has never told before. The result is a unique text that is available nowhere else.

As Dr. Keith says, Jesus has given us a way of leading that brings out our best, and helps us to bring out the best in others. All of us on the team that produced "Discovering Servant Leadership" pray that it will be a blessing to you and will bring out the best in all the participants in the course.

Dr. Andrew Crilly
Producer

Our Journey Begins

Introduction

Welcome to the New Institute course on "Discovering Servant Leadership." If you haven't heard about servant leadership, or you would like to learn more about it, this course is designed for you.

The title of the course is "Discovering Servant Leadership" because we will be on a journey of discovery. As we move through the modules, I hope that you will make discoveries that will be helpful to you as a leader.

I will start by sharing my own journey of discovery. I was pretty far into my career before I found servant leadership. After sharing my own journey, I will provide a Biblical framework for understanding servant leadership. We will discuss God's message about leadership in the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus about leadership in the New Testament. We will conclude with a preview of each of the eight modules that make up the rest of the course.

Beginning my search

Let me begin with my own journey. When I was a boy, I enjoyed reading books about famous leaders. I was really curious. Who were those people? What did they do? How did they make a difference? Why do other people think they were great? I became fascinated with leaders and the idea of leadership.

Eventually, I decided to give it a try, myself. I became involved in student government, and ended up as student body president at Roosevelt High School in Honolulu.

When I went to college, I continued my involvement in the high school student government field, serving as a speaker, consultant, and writer. As I worked with student councils around the country, it was clear that most of them didn't really care about the rest of the student body. Student leaders were happy to be elected because that made them the big men and women on campus. They were the social elite, praised by teachers and administrators, and given special privileges. They weren't interested in making a difference in the lives of the students who elected them. They were there to reign, not serve. I found that very discouraging.

But what I was learning in college didn't make me feel any better. I majored in

American Government. Scholars were fond of talking about *realpolitik*, which is basically politics with no reference to ethics or morality. It was about seizing power, and using it to your own advantage, whether it was right or wrong. They admired Machiavelli, who centuries ago advised Italian princes on how to gain power by being deceitful and immoral. My classmates thought that was very sophisticated. I thought it was very wrong. Leaders should be moral, and they should have moral purposes.

These ideas about leadership are what I call the power model of leadership. The power model says that leadership is about acquiring and wielding power. It is about making people do things. It is about how to attack and win. It is about manipulation and coercion. It is about leaders grabbing what they can get for themselves, stabbing others in the back, and pulling themselves up the ladder as far and as fast as they can go.

This model of leadership wasn't attractive to me. It was too selfish and too small. I thought that leadership ought to be bigger than just grabbing power for oneself. It ought to be about loving and helping others. Jesus commanded us to love and called us to serve. Why couldn't we lead with love and service?

By the time I graduated from college, it was very clear to me that there is too much pain and suffering in the world. There is too much violence and injustice, too much starvation and disease, too much environmental degradation. There are too many dreams unfulfilled, too many talents ignored, too many opportunities lost. I knew that the world does not have to be like this. It could be much, much better.

But it seemed to me that the world is not going to get much better if so many people use the power model of leadership. Yes, there are barriers to change, but it seemed to me that most of those barriers are not physical laws of nature but matters of the mind and heart. When people's minds and hearts are focused on power, things don't get better. People who are focused on power are not trying to make things better. They are just trying to grab more power.

My early career

I started my career, and worked as an attorney, state government official, high tech park developer, and university president. Every day, I saw the destructive impact of the power model of leadership. People would stop something good from happening, just to show that they had the power to stop it. Good ideas were rejected, not on their merits, but because the ideas came from a rival power group. People started fights with other power groups because they felt they had been slighted in some way. These battles between power groups may have changed their relative power positions, but they didn't make the world a better place.

Here is a personal example of the pettiness that occurs in the power model. I spent seven years working in the Hawaii State Department of Planning and Economic

Development. I started as a Coordinator in the Office of the Director. During my first two weeks on the job, I became the subject of a political attack by a state senator. He was the chairman of a Senate committee that oversaw some of our department's programs. The senator was in a power battle with my boss, the department director.

One morning the director and I were at a public hearing at the state capitol in front of the senator's committee. With no warning, the senator began attacking the director for hiring me. The senator had never met me or seen my resume. However, he was sure I was not qualified, and I was a bad choice, and I should have never been hired, and so on. I just sat there, trying to keep my jaw from dropping.

After the hearing, we walked back to the office. "Do I still have a job?" I asked the director. "Of course," he said. "That wasn't about you. The senator wanted to attack *me*. You were just a handy excuse for an attack." It was just another attempt by the senator to embarrass the director and demonstrate his own power.

I had a problem working on legislation with political leaders who were focused on power. They seemed to have only one operating principle—they favored whatever they thought would give them the most power. As a result, an agreement reached today could fall apart tomorrow. They changed their position every time they saw a new way to gain power.

Later, I worked in a private company in which all the attention was focused on the CEO. We employees weren't sure what would happen next, because we didn't know what the CEO would do next. Everything seemed to hinge on whether or not the CEO was in a good mood. I thought our attention as employees was badly misdirected. We weren't serving the mission of the organization and our customers, we were serving the CEO.

Unfortunately, when all the attention is on the leader, little attention is paid to everyone else. Of course, leaders are important, but they don't *know* everything, and they don't *do* everything. How about the people who do the daily work and actually produce the programs, products, and services of the organization? Their contributions were devalued. Only the CEO was important. I thought it was a very unhealthy environment.

Finding servant leadership

I kept looking for a better way to lead, a way that was based on love and service, a way that respected and included everyone in the organization. I was forty years old when I finally found it. It is called servant leadership.

I first came across it in its modern secular form in Robert Greenleaf's classic essay, *The Servant as Leader.*[1] Greenleaf said that servant leadership begins with the desire to serve. Then, when a person sees the opportunity to serve by leading, he or she becomes a servant leader.

That is very different from someone who begins with the desire to lead, perhaps because he wants power and wealth. The difference between the servant leader and the power-oriented leader is that the servant leader makes sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.

How does a servant leader know that he or she is serving well? Greenleaf said that the best test is whether those served grow as persons. Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?

When I read Greenleaf's essay, bells rang and lights flashed. I knew this was what I was looking for. A couple of years later, I discovered to my delight that Jesus had said something very similar, two thousand years before Greenleaf. The teaching can be found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Jesus gathered his disciples and he said:

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:25-28)

This teaching of Jesus touched me deeply. I felt my life experience and my faith come together. Now it all made sense. It had been a long journey, but finally, I was home. Thank God! I had finally made it home.

Applying servant leadership

Because servant leadership is so different from the power model of leadership, people are surprised that servant leadership works. I learned that it not only works, it works when times are really tough.

Soon after reading Greenleaf's essay, I had the opportunity to apply servant leadership in a very challenging situation. I served as president of a university that was about to go bankrupt and lose accreditation. Experts thought the university had maybe six months to live.

The accreditation team that visited the campus found 41 deficiencies. The accreditation commission did not put the university on public probation, because students would have stopped coming and that would have killed the university for sure. Instead, they put the university on private warning, in the hope that a new president could be found who would lead the turnaround.

I was the new president. I didn't apply for the job. The Board of Regents ran through 200 candidates and ended up with nobody. That's when one of the Regents called me. After reviewing the university's mission and values, and the contributions its graduates were making to the community, it seemed to me that the university was worth saving. I prayed about it, and I felt God calling me to do it. I let the Regents know that I was genuinely interested. Two weeks later, I was appointed president.

The next six years were a daily struggle, with lots of hard decisions, and lots of controversy. We affirmed our mission, and gave priority to teaching and direct service to students. Within that framework, we adopted an action plan that addressed the 41 deficiencies. We had to cut programs and positions and reallocate resources. We had to hire new leaders, start new programs, run a capital campaign, and renovate facilities. Payroll was at risk on a regular basis. We didn't have enough money to pay all our vendors, so we had to pick and choose which checks we put in the mail each month. It was tense. Every day seemed to bring a new crisis.

Fortunately, many people had courage and worked hard, so we were able to make a lot of progress. In fact, when the accreditation team came back three years later, they used words like "miraculous" and "amazing." They said we had substantially addressed 39 of the 41 deficiencies. As a result, the accreditation commission fully restored the university's accreditation. We just needed to finish our financial restructuring so that the university could again run a surplus. That took two more years, but we are able to do that also.

All of that happened many years ago. I am happy to say that today, the university is doing well indeed. But I don't think the university would still exist, if we had not done our best to apply servant leadership principles.

There were two ways in which servant leadership played an especially important role in our success. First, it helped me to avoid the power game, and second, it helped the administration to work with the Board and the faculty.

First, servant leadership principles helped me to avoid the power game. If I had gotten sucked into a contest for power, I think the university would have gone down. I know that sounds self-important, but I think it is true. We would have all been so busy fighting for power that we would not have addressed the real issues that determined our survival. Soon it would have been over, and the university's doors would have closed forever.

The hardest part of avoiding the power game was enduring the personal attacks. That was a significant spiritual test for me. There was a small group of people who would rather fight than solve problems. They attacked me relentlessly, and they said outrageous, vicious things.

The principles of servant leadership reminded me that it wasn't about me. It was about our ability to serve each other and our students and fulfill the mission of our university. I needed to ignore or deflect the personal attacks and stay focused on what we needed to get done.

That took a lot of self-discipline. When you're being attacked, and you have the power to counter-attack, it's hard to hold back. I held back for both spiritual and practical reasons. From a spiritual standpoint, I did not want to be like them—I didn't want to say mean things that were designed to hurt people. From a practical standpoint, I was sure that a counter-attack from me would almost always make things worse, and things were bad enough already. So instead of counter-attacking, I did my best to explain the issues as objectively as possible. I tried to inform instead of attack.

Second, servant leadership helped the administration to work with the Board and the faculty. They saw the president's role completely differently—in fact, their views were the opposite of each other.

Most of our Board members had backgrounds in business. They were used to making decisions quickly and decisively. They thought I spent too much time listening and consulting with others. They wanted me to be more autocratic. They wanted me to exercise a lot of power.

By contrast, the faculty thought I was much too autocratic. Some thought that the administration didn't spend enough time listening and consulting. Other faculty members felt that I should be completely impartial. I should not take positions on campus issues. They said that my role was to preside, not lead. They thought that I should not exercise any power at all.

There was really no way to resolve these diametrically opposed points of view. However, when we applied servant leadership principles, the question was not "who has power?"— the question was "what do we need to do?" The focus was on identifying and meeting needs. The process was about listening to each other, being creative, and seeking reasonable compromises.

I did my best to encourage people to sit on the same side of the table, shoulder to shoulder, and fight the problems, not each other. I knew that if we could reach agreement on what needed to be done, it wouldn't matter who had the power.

I am convinced that servant leadership is a major reason that we were able to pull the university through tough times and lay a new foundation for the future. For me, it was the right approach spiritually as well as practically.

Well, I hope that gives you an idea as to why servant leadership has been my passion

for nearly thirty years, now. I have done my best to learn about it, apply it, and share it with others.

Along the way, I have enjoyed participating in the international servant leadership movement. My role in the servant leadership movement has been as a speaker, author, and staff leader. For five years, I was the CEO of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership in the United States, and for three years I was CEO of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (Asia), based in Singapore. Currently, I enjoy teaching servant leadership at Pacific Rim Christian University, where I also serve as president.

So that is my journey—how I discovered and first applied servant leadership. Let's turn now to the Biblical framework for understanding servant leadership.

The sad history of kings

The Bible does not look at leadership the way our secular culture looks at it. Very often, when leaders or leadership are mentioned in the Bible, the words we find are not about power, they are about service. The words we find are "servant," "steward," and "shepherd."

One of the surprises in the Old Testament is that God did not want the people of Israel to have a king. That is surprising because we know that Israel *did* have kings. However, that is not what God wanted.

The story starts in 1 Samuel. As the scene opens, we find the people of Israel asking for a king. They wanted a king like the people of other countries. Samuel was displeased, so he prayed to the Lord. God told Samuel to listen to the people, but warn them against having a king. Samuel explained to the people how badly a king would behave, but they did not listen.

Here is the story as we find it at 1 Samuel 8:4-22:

> So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, 'You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.' But when they said, 'Give us a king to lead us,' this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: 'Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.'
>
> Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, 'This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take

> your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.'
>
> But the people refused to listen to Samuel. 'No!' they said. 'We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.'
>
> When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, 'Listen to them and give them a king.'

I think this is amazing. This is one of those "wow" moments. God warned the people of Israel, in great detail, about how bad it would be if they had a king. But the people still wanted one.

Why did God reluctantly agree to a king? I assume that God concluded that the people would have to learn the hard way. They would have to experience God's truth first-hand. And experience it they did.

Things did not go well for their kings, starting with Saul, the first king. He won some early military battles, but he disobeyed God, and instead of anointing David as his successor, he tried to kill David. After Saul and his sons died in battle, David became king.

King David! Here is the slayer of Goliath and singer of psalms, much admired, and beloved of God. But David committed adultery and murder, and was alienated from his spouses and children. One of his sons raped one of his daughters, and then another son killed the first, and his favorite son rebelled against him and was killed. It was tragic. David was not allowed to build the temple.

It was his son Solomon who built the temple. People of his day knew about the glory of Solomon! They came from far and wide to see the riches of his kingdom. Unfortunately, he taxed and burdened his people very heavily in order to build a royal palace as well as the temple. His sins included idolatry and turning away from God. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. The Bible says that his wives led him astray. He built shrines for the gods of his foreign wives, and no longer followed the Lord completely.

The Bible says that Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord. God was angry and said he would take away part of the kingdom from Solomon's successor. Indeed, after Solomon died, the whole northern Kingdom of Israel was lost forever. Only the southern kingdom of Judah remained. It was a disaster.

All three of the first kings were flawed. They were human like us. Saul disobeyed God, David was an adulterer and murderer, and Solomon turned away from God and did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

But wait! It gets worse. Those were only the first three kings. Arthur Boers wrote a book titled *Servants and Fools.*[2] In that book he reports on the kings mentioned in First and Second Kings and First and Second Chronicles. Of the 36 kings, 28 of them are described by the Bible as "evil." The *Bible* calls them evil. Only eight were good, and among the eight, only two were above reproach. That's only two out of 36 that were above reproach. God warned his people about kings. He said it would not go well, and it did not go well.

We know that God was not happy about all this. As Ezekiel reports in chapter 34, God was angry at the kings—the shepherds of Israel—because they only took care of themselves, they didn't take care of the flock. They didn't strengthen the weak or heal the sick or bind up the injured. They didn't bring back the strays or search for the lost. As a result, the sheep were scattered over the whole earth.

God wanted to dismiss the shepherds of Israel and once again care for his sheep himself. Here is what Ezekiel reported in chapter 34.

> 'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.'

So God agonized over what was happening. He longed to take care of his people instead of leaving them in the hands of bad shepherds.

Of course, God was active during the time of the kings. He sent the prophets. Their

role was to counterbalance the kings, because the kings were so bad. The prophets were messengers from God. The prophets called people back to a right relationship with God. The prophets let people know what disasters would befall them if they did *not* restore their relationship with God. Prophets could also take direct action when needed.

In addition to the prophets, there are people in the Old Testament who were heroes because of their faith and courage. Noah was obedient in building the ark. Abraham obeyed God and left home for a new land. Daniel would not disavow his faith, and he survived the lion's den. Esther had the courage to face the king and save her people. Ruth had the courage to follow Naomi and start a new life. Prophets and people of faith, not kings, stand out as heroes.

The simple message of the Old Testament is that God did not want his people to have kings. When they had kings, the kings did badly. But if we are not supposed to have kings, how are we supposed to lead others? What are we to do?

Jesus and servant leadership

Well, Jesus told us what to do. He told us how to lead in a different way, not the way of kings, but the way of servants.

As I mentioned earlier, this teaching of Jesus is found in all three of the synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The setting in Matthew is that the mother of James and John asked Jesus to place her sons at his right and his left in his kingdom. When the other disciples heard this, they were indignant. That's when Jesus gathered his disciples and said:

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:25-28)

Jesus said we should not lord it over others. We are not to be hierarchical. Instead, we are to be servants when we lead.

This idea of a servant's heart was very important to Jesus. Scholars agree that the central message of Jesus was about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God that Jesus described is a transformed world, a world in which domination systems no longer exist. Power is no longer used to oppress or enslave. That's because the kingdom of God is not for power, the kingdom is for love and servanthood. Bible scholar N.T. Wright said that this teaching about the servant's heart is at the center of Christ's vision of the kingdom of God.[3] It's the core message.

One more thing: Scholars agree that the kingdom is for earth, not just heaven. Jesus taught us to pray, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." So the kingdom of God is not for later, it is for now. We should be helping the kingdom of God to break into our world. We can do that with love and a servant's heart.

We know that Jesus demonstrated a servant's heart. The Gospel of John describes how Jesus knelt down and washed the feet of his disciples as an example of how we are to serve. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk. 22:27).

We need to remember that servanthood is not servitude. Servitude occurs when people are forced to serve. We are not forced to serve. Instead we choose of our own free will to be servants. We choose of our own free will to love and help others. We choose of our own free will to follow the example of Christ.

God shared his anguish with Ezekiel about the bad shepherds. Finally, Jesus, the good shepherd, arrived. This is what Jesus said, recorded in the Gospel of John:

> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.
>
> I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (Jn. 10:11-16)

And so we complete the arc from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from bad kings to Jesus, who is among us as one who serves; from bad shepherds to Christ, the one good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. That is the Biblical framework for this course. We are not to be kings, we are to be servants and good shepherds when we lead.

What we will explore in the following modules is how to be a servant leader. We will take the teachings of the Bible and connect them with daily reality. We will address practical questions that are important regardless of what kind of organization one is leading in the ministry or the marketplace. Along the way there will be plenty of stories about servant leaders in action, stories that illustrate their effectiveness in the real world.

Now here is a preview of each of the eight modules.

Module One: Faith, Love, and Service

The first module is about faith, love, and service. A life of Christian leadership requires deep faith—an unshakeable faith that will sustain our relationship with God as we do God's work. That faith must flow into deeds, and those deeds should be based on love and service.

Jesus gave us two Great Commandments, and they are both about love—the commandment to love God, and the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. Love is how we come to know God best. It is how we represent Christ best. It is how we become *our* best. And it is how we keep our families, friends, and communities together and at *their* best.

Jesus not only commands us to love, he calls us to serve. Whom should we serve? We can love and serve our families, friends, and communities. We can love and serve people throughout the world. We can use the parable of the sheep and the goats as a checklist, helping the hungry and thirsty, welcoming strangers, helping those who need clothing or are sick, and visiting those in prison.

In this module we will share the story of Family Promise, a national program for the homeless that started with a sandwich, and the Nozomi Project, a faith-based social enterprise that began after a devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Module Two: The Question of Power vs Service

The second module is about two major models of leadership—the power model and the service model. The power model says that leadership is about acquiring and wielding power. This is the dominant model in our culture, but it has many problems. Most important, it does not advance the Kingdom of God. Jesus clearly rejected the power model.

The service model says that leadership is about making a difference in the lives of others. This is the model that embodies the teachings of Jesus. He calls us to be servants when we lead. Servant leadership is about identifying and meeting the needs of others. Instead of chains of command, servant leaders create networks of love within their organizations.

Leadership experts have come to conclusions that are consistent with the teachings of Jesus. They are beginning to understand how much we can achieve by loving each other instead of lording it over each other.

In this module we will share the stories of *Macbeth*, *All the King's Men*, *One Flew Over the*

Cuckoo's Nest, Cincinnatus, George Washington, Jose de San Martin, and TD Industries, a specialty construction company in Texas.

Module Three: The Characteristics of Servant Leaders

The third module is about the characteristics of servant leaders. Jesus is our ultimate example of a servant leader. Like Jesus, servant leaders are good shepherds. They begin with the desire to serve. They love people and want to help them. They are situational. They take risks, they give back, and they stand for what is right.

Compared with other ideas about leadership, servant leadership has a strong moral component, focuses on followers, is concerned with the success of all stakeholders, and promotes humility in the leader. Humility makes it possible for servant leaders to build trust and connect with their colleagues.

In this module we will tell the stories of people who exhibited the characteristics of servant leaders. Those people include George Williams, Will Hartzell, Harriet Tubman, Atticus Finch, and a Captain in the United States Marine Corps.

Module Four: The Key Practices of Servant Leaders

The fourth module is about the key practices of servant leaders. There is plenty of empirical research that demonstrates that servant leaders are indeed effective in the workplace. At the most fundamental level, servant leadership is simple. If you love people and pay attention to their needs, you and your organization are very likely to succeed.

There are many practices that help servant leaders to be effective in a way that benefits their colleagues and customers. We will talk about seven key practices: self-awareness, listening, changing the pyramid, developing your colleagues, coaching not controlling, unleashing the energy and intelligence of others, and foresight.

In this module we will tell stories about Dr. Ernesto Sirolli, Suzuki Motor Company, the president of a large retail chain, and Ken Melrose at Game Time.

Module Five: Building Communities to Serve

The fifth module is about organizational communities and institutional operating principles. Any form of organization can be used to serve others. Whatever form is used, the organization can become a Christian community. That Christian community should

be a servant-institution, focused on serving its customers and society at large. We will discuss eight institutional operating principles that guide servant leaders as they lead their institutions to truly serve others.

In this module we will share stories about the Thang family in Myanmar, Broetje Orchards in Washington State, a massage parlor founded by a Christian in Thailand, Johnsonville Sausage, the Tolaram Group based in Singapore, and the CEO of an insurance company in New York.

Module Six: Leading Organizational Change

The sixth module is about leading organizational change. There are many reasons for leading change. An organization may be failing, or growing, or seeking to improve its service. External forces and internal turnover can cause change. People vary in their experience of change, and specific changes impact individuals differently. Even when the need for change is clear, people can experience stress, pain, and doubt.

Servant leaders are especially good at leading change. They do not use organizational change as an excuse for building their own power and position. They are good team leaders, open to the ideas, talents, and leadership of others. They strengthen their organizational communities so that they can stay together during the change process. And they are good shepherds who consult with others and care about the emotional and spiritual health of all team members as the organization changes.

In this module we will tell stories about a NASA cockpit simulation, the closure of the Delphi brake assembly operations in Ohio, Capt. Michael Abrashoff of the *USS Benfold*, and the Cleveland Clinic.

Module Seven: Building Cathedrals

The seventh module is about human behavior and motivation. We will look at Theory X, which assumes that people try to avoid work, and Theory Y, which assumes that people are willing to work, and can make significant contributions to their organizations. We will explore extrinsic motivation, which is about something you *have* to do, and intrinsic motivation, which is about something that you *want* to do.

Servant leaders move beyond Theory X and extrinsic motivation and focus on Theory Y and intrinsic motivation. They know that the highest levels of performance are the result of intrinsic motivation. Meaning is an intrinsic motivator, and there are many sources of meaning at work. Because meaning is so important, servant-leaders are meaning-makers for their colleagues, helping them to find meaning in their work by

connecting it to the larger impact of their organizations.

In this module we will tell a story from a book by Alfie Kohn, plus stories about Viktor Frankl, who survived Nazi labor camps, and Cheryl Bachelder, CEO of Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen.

Module Eight: In the World, Not of the World

The eighth module is about being in the world, not of the world. We live in a secular, commercial culture that considers power and wealth to be symbols of success. But Jesus rejected earthly power, and he pointed us away from material wealth. That's why Christian leaders don't start with the way the world is; they start with the way *Christ* is. We can lead in a way that is counter-cultural and effective if we are in the world, not of the world. We need to be in the world, loving and helping others, but we do not have to measure ourselves by the world's symbols of success like power and wealth.

There are challenges to being a servant leader, but we know that Jesus has taught us a way of leading that brings out our best and helps us to bring out the best in others. Servant leadership matters. People all over the world are ready to follow servant leaders. Christian servant leaders can lead them in ways that help the kingdom of God to break into our world.

In this final module, we will share the stories of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Dr. Tan Lai Yong, John Howell, Mother Teresa, and an 18-year-old who was literally run out of town for giving a speech in which he urged student leaders to care about their fellow students.

Well, that is a quick preview of the eight modules to come. I look forward to sharing them with you. Thank you—and God bless you!

Faith, Love, and Service

Module One Lecture

Welcome to the first module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." In the introduction, we provided a Biblical framework for Christian leadership. We learned that we are not to be kings. Instead, we are to lead with a servant's heart.

A life of Christian leadership is a challenging life. It requires that we have a deep faith—an unshakeable faith that will sustain our relationship with God as we do God's work. And our faith must flow into our deeds. The basis for our deeds should be love and service. We are commanded to love, and we are called to serve. In this first module, then, we will be talking about faith, love, and service as the foundation of a life of Christian leadership.

Faith

So what is faith? It can be defined as trust and confidence in God. It means trusting in God even when we do not understand what God is doing. Faith is our response to God's self-revelation. Faith connects us to God and makes our relationship with God possible.

When we live by faith, we can sense God's presence. We can see God moving in our lives and the lives of those around us. We can see God in the natural world. We can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in our loving relationships with our families and friends. We can hear the call of Christ when we take up our crosses and serve others. Our faith makes miracles possible. Jesus told us that our faith can move mountains.

Faith is not about the material world that can be measured and tested by science. Faith is about the life of the spirit. It is not about what we see physically, but what we see spiritually. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:7, "we live by faith, not by sight."

One of the most dramatic and inspiring affirmations of faith in the Bible is found in the Old Testament book of Habakkuk. Habakkuk was a prophet who lived 2,600 years ago. It was a turbulent time for Judeans, who came under the control of the Assyrians, then the Egyptians, and then the Babylonians.

Habakkuk complained to God about the violence and wickedness in Judah. What was God going to do about it? God answered that the wicked would be punished. But God surprised Habakkuk when he described how he would do it. The wicked would be

punished by the Babylonians, who were known for being ruthless, swift, and unstoppable. They would conquer the Judeans. Later, the Babylonians themselves would be judged, but the Judeans would suffer first.

Habakkuk was distraught. Would the Babylonians wipe out the Judeans? That didn't make sense. How could God do this? You can almost imagine Habakkuk saying: "Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" Weren't the Babylonians worse than the most wicked Judeans? He did not understand.

But in the face of that coming destruction, Habakkuk still had faith in God. At Habakkuk 3:17-19 we read one of the strongest affirmations of faith anywhere in the Bible. Habakkuk said:

> Though the fig tree does not bud
> and there are no grapes on the vines,
> though the olive crop fails
> and the fields produce no food,
> though there are no sheep in the pen
> and no cattle in the stalls,
> yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
> I will be joyful in God my Savior.
> The Sovereign Lord is my strength;
> he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
> he enables me to tread on the heights.

Judah was agrarian, so Habakkuk was describing complete devastation. But he affirmed that even if there are no crops and no livestock, even if there is nothing to eat; even if death is everywhere, his faith will remain. His faith was unshakeable. He remained joyful in God his Savior. He knew that the Lord was his strength. He did not want to give up his faith because that would mean giving up his relationship with God. He knew that with confidence and trust in the Lord, he could face anything. We need that same confidence and trust in the Lord.

Faith must flow into deeds

But it is not enough to have faith. Our faith must flow into our deeds.

People often ask WWJD—what would Jesus do? That's good, but I like to ask, WDJD—what *did* Jesus do? We know the answer. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, and reached out to the outcast. Jesus said that whoever believes in him will do the same (Jn. 14:12). In Ephesians, Paul tells us that "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10).

This is not about earning one's way to heaven. As Rick Warren pointed out, "you're not saved *by* service, but you are saved *for* service."[4] We should be so grateful for our salvation that we want to demonstrate our faith through our actions. Those actions can make our faith come alive. As we read at James 2:14-17:

> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Or, as we read in 1 John 3:17-18: "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."

Commanded to love

So our faith must flow into our deeds. The basis for our deeds should be love and service.

When a Pharisee asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment, Jesus replied with two Great Commandments—to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. When he was asked who is my neighbor, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan who stopped and helped a stranger who was wounded and lying by the side of the road (Lk. 10:29-37).

I think it is very significant that Christ *commanded* us to love others. It's not a *suggestion*. He did not say, "Please think about the possibility of maybe considering the idea of loving people, if you feel like it, and it is convenient, and you aren't too busy, and the people you consider loving are really lovable, and they will really appreciate your love." He didn't say we should give it a try, but if we get tired, or it doesn't work out, we can just give up. No. There are no excuses, no exceptions, no escape clauses. We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves, no matter what.

Love is the key

So why is that? Why are we *commanded* to love? Why isn't it just a suggestion? I can think of at least four reasons. First, that is how we come to know God best. Second, that is how we represent Christ best. Third, that is how we become *our* best. Fourth, that is how we keep our families, friends, and communities together and at *their* best.

First, when we love others, we come to know God. I am sure you know the Scriptural passage from 1 John 4: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does

not know God, because God is love." We are created by God, and we worship God. If we are to know God, love is the key.

Second, when we love each other, we demonstrate the love of Christ, and are known as his people. Jesus prayed during the Last Supper that his disciples might be one, so that the world will believe that God sent him. At John 13 he commanded his disciples to love one another, so that everyone would know that they are his disciples. If we are to truly represent Christ as his disciples, love is the key.

Third, when we love others, we become our best. We are at our best when we are giving and receiving love. I believe that we were created to love and be loved. That is how God designed us. We are designed to run on love. When we love others, we are more giving, more caring, more patient, more kind. When we love others, we become a gift to others. If we do not love others, we are not who we are supposed to be; we are not all that we can be; we are not doing what we were born to do. If we want to be our best, love is the key.

Fourth, love is the glue that can hold together our families, friends, and communities. I think especially of our families. For parents, the story of the Prodigal Son has profound meaning. Unconditional love makes it possible to stay together, even when we disagree or stray and need forgiveness. If we want to stay together, love is the key.

The nice words

My wife and I have two daughters and a son. We have always tried to make it clear to them that we love them. They are adults now, but when they were young, one thing I used to do was to tuck them into bed at night and say the words that our kids called "the nice words." Night after night, year after year, I told each of our children: "I love you. You're a good kid. I like being your Daddy. I'm glad you're my daughter, I'm glad you're my son. I like being part of your family. I hope you have a good night's sleep." And then each daughter got a kiss on the cheek and my son got a pat on the head, and I turned out the lights.

Of course, there were some nights when I was angry at my kids for what they had done that day. There had been name calling, or hitting and shoving, or dishonesty, or the shirking of chores. When I tucked them in, I talked about that, and made it clear that what they had done was wrong, and it was important that they not do it again. Then I would say "the nice words." Sometimes the words were hard to say, but I wanted them to know that even if I was upset with their behavior, I still loved them. When they behaved themselves I was happy, and when they didn't behave themselves I was sad, but I loved them no matter what.

I kept saying "the nice words," year after year. Then the day came when our youngest

daughter, Angela, let me know that she didn't need to hear "the nice words" anymore. I think what she meant was that she was a grown-up twelve-year-old, and "the nice words" were for little kids. I was surprised, but I said okay. Several nights went by without me tucking her in or saying "the nice words." Then one night, when I was working at my desk at home, I heard Angela calling down the staircase.

"Daddy?"

"Yes, honey."

"Aren't you going to come up and tuck me in? You didn't say the nice words yet."

"Oh. Okay," I said. And the nightly ritual began again. She still wanted to hear the words, and I still wanted to say them. I think we're never too old to say the nice words, and we're never too old to *hear* the nice words.[5]

In short, love is what the Christian life is about. It is why we are here. If we do not love others, we miss God's purpose for our lives. Without love, our lives can easily become meaningless. The first verses of Corinthians 13 are often read at weddings. I recommend that you don't wait for the next wedding to read them. It is good to remind ourselves that without love we are nothing, and we gain nothing. As Paul wrote:

> If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. (1 Co. 13:1-3)

So we are here to "do everything in love" (1 Co. 16:14). We are here to love our families and friends, our neighbors, our co-workers, members of our churches and our communities. We are here to love all people. We do not have to agree with them or approve of what they do. Love is deeper than agreement or approval. We can love people even while disciplining them or protecting ourselves from them—we do not have to let them hurt us or others. But we must love everyone. We must hold an attitude of good will toward them. Jesus allowed no exceptions and no excuses.

Called to serve

But that is not all. Jesus commands us to love but he also calls us to serve. This is very natural. When we truly love people, we care about what happens to them. We want to help them when they need help. Jesus modelled this for us by feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and reaching out to the outcast. He made it clear in the parable of the sheep and the goats that we should do the same (Mt 25:31-46).

> When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.
>
> Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'
>
> Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'
>
> The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
>
> Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'
>
> They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'
>
> He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'
>
> Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

The message is clear. Those who will have eternal life are those who serve others.

When we love others and wish to serve them, no act of service will be too small or humble. During the Last Supper, Jesus demonstrated humble service when he washed the feet of his disciples. We read at John 13:3-5:

> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the

> towel that was wrapped around him.

When Peter resisted, Jesus told him, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me" (Jn. 13:8). Peter relented, and Jesus continued washing.

> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.' (Jn. 13:12-15)

By the way, washing someone's feet during the time of Jesus was not a fun thing. People wore sandals or went barefoot, and there were a lot of things in those streets that we don't want to talk about. Feet got really dirty. A lot of people never washed their own feet—servants and slaves did that for them. When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he was doing something extremely humble in the context of his time.

Donald Kraybill, in *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, described Jesus as a servant Messiah who came among us as a waiter, a slave, a servant, and not a boss.[6] Siang-Yang Tan, in his book, *Full Service,* said: "God has called us *first* to servanthood, not leadership."[7] Rick Warren, in his book, *The Purpose Driven Life,* said that "thousands of books have been written on leadership, but few on servanthood… But to be like Jesus is to be a servant. That's what he called himself…You must have a servant's heart."[8]

Each of us has gifts. We glorify God when we use those gifts to help others. As we are urged in 1 Peter 4:10: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others…"

Whom shall we serve?

We are called to serve. But whom should we serve? We can begin in our families, helping each other to grow, helping each other to use our God-given gifts, and helping each other to manage the details of our daily lives together.

In one of his books, C.S. Lewis talked about daily life as a Christian. He said that it is no good to be up in your room praying, when your wife needs your help down in the kitchen. We are here to help each other, starting with our families.

In addition to our families, we can reach out to friends and colleagues, helping them in times of need, encouraging and supporting them as they pursue their hopes and dreams. Beyond our families, friends, and colleagues, we can identify needs in our neighborhoods and communities. We can address worldwide problems.

Every day, we can watch and listen. We can identify the needs of those around us. Then, in thousands of ways, we can *serve*. We can change lives. We can share the Gospel. We can bring hope.

The parable checklist

If you don't know where to begin serving others, why not begin with the examples Jesus gave us in the parable of the sheep and the goats? We can use the parable as a checklist. Why not focus on providing food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty; welcoming a stranger; providing clothing to those in need; helping the sick; and visiting those in prison?

> Let's help the hungry. It is estimated that more than 800 million people do not get enough food to be healthy. On average, one person dies every second as a result of hunger. Even in the United States, one of the richest countries in the world, it is estimated that 49 million Americans—including 16 million children—lack the means to get enough nutritious food on a regular basis. People are hungry.
>
> Let's help the thirsty. It is estimated that more than a billion people lack access to clean drinking water, and 2.8 billion face water shortages at least one month per year. People are thirsty.
>
> Let's welcome strangers. In many countries, there has been a breakdown in communities, so that millions have become isolated or alienated. People also experience various kinds of prejudice that isolate them. For thousands of years, people have excluded others because of their skin color or ethnicity. People are lonely.
>
> Let's help those who need clothing. Here in the United States, it is estimated that about 48 million children living in low-income and poor families—and their parents—could benefit from donated clothes. People need clothing.
>
> Let's help the sick. Cardiovascular diseases—disorders of the heart and blood—are the number one cause of death throughout the world, killing more than 17 million people in 2011. In the United States alone, nearly 600,000 people die each year of heart disease. Another 600,000 die each year from cancer. Meanwhile, it is estimated that 40 million people around the world are living with HIV/AIDS. The World Health Organization estimates that in 2010, there were 219 million documented cases of malaria. These are only a few of the diseases that ravage humankind. People are sick.
>
> Let's visit those in prison. It is estimated that there are nine million people in prisons around the world. The United States has 2.3 million people behind bars,

far more than any other nation. Many would appreciate simple human contact with caring individuals from the community. Prisoners need visitors.

Meeting global needs

It has been said that there are thousands of verses in the Bible about poverty and the plight of the poor. It is estimated that three billion people live on $2.50 or less per day. Here in America, it is estimated that 40 million people suffer in poverty. In addition to hunger and homelessness, poverty usually results in a wide range of social, educational, and health problems for the poor. Poverty that is caused by injustice can generate violence between individuals, communities, and nations. Wars have taken a huge toll on humankind. More than 120 million people have died in wars during the past hundred years—including the war-related deaths of civilians from diseases, famine, and atrocities.

In Genesis 2:15, we read that God put man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. We haven't been taking care of it. Environmental degradation is everywhere, in our polluted land, rivers, oceans, and air. Plant and animal species are becoming extinct. Pollutants have found their way into previously pristine natural habitats. Vast forests are being cut down and not replaced.

In addition to a healthy natural environment, people need educational opportunities, safe living conditions, fair treatment from institutions of justice, and basic personal and political freedoms. Most important, they need to love and be loved. They need opportunities to form communities, to work, to worship, and to develop spiritually. People who have plenty of material goods often have spiritual needs. They may "have it all" but find little meaning in what they have.

It started with a sandwich

When you decide to be of service to others, you may be surprised at what happens. For example, one of the programs that is addressing the homeless issue is Family Promise. It started when one person, Karen Olson, was on her way to a business meeting and noticed a homeless woman on the street. Karen bought her a sandwich. While the woman, Millie, accepted the sandwich, what she wanted was a chance to be heard. Karen listened, and learned about the profound feelings of diminished self-worth and disconnection from society that resulted from homelessness.

Karen and her two sons began delivering lunches to homeless people on the streets of New York. But in 1986, Karen began connecting those in need with those who wanted to help. She identified people and organizations who could provide shelter, meals, and housing. She recruited volunteers who could help their homeless neighbors find employment and reconnect with society. Churches offered hospitality within their buildings. The YMCA provided showers and a family day center. The first interfaith

hospitality network was established.

The program went national, and today, Family Promise touches the lives of more than 93,000 people and engages more than 200,000 volunteers each year. It represents a national movement that believes we can address family homelessness — right here in our own communities.

Helping people to flourish

The key to ending poverty is job creation and economic growth. In his book, *The Economics of Neighborly Love*,[9] Tom Nelson argues that we are made to flourish, and to share with others so they can flourish, too. That means we need to build our own capacity, so that we have tangible resources to contribute to others. The goal, however, is not short-term support. That's fine, but long-term, we need to help others to help themselves by creating jobs for them. There is an old saying that if you want to feed a person for a day, give him a fish. If you want to feed a person for a lifetime, teach him how to fish. I think you might also want to give him a fishing pole and bait to get him started.

Entrepreneurial enterprises and small businesses are a major source of new jobs in our country. Nelson reports that some churches are helping to create jobs by encouraging entrepreneurship, and even providing seed capital for new businesses. They are offering training in entrepreneurship, setting up incubators for new businesses, and connecting them with local banks that are willing to provide loans.

When hope arises

Sometimes, the jobs are created out of tragedy. The Nozomi Project is an example. In March 2011, a *tsunami* hit eastern Japan. More than 17,000 people were killed or missing, and 6,000 injured. There was massive destruction of property—more than a million buildings collapsed or were damaged. The tsunami wreaked havoc as far as six miles inland. The region was devastated.

Immediately following the tsunami, a team of Christian missionaries arrived in Ishinomaki, one of the affected towns. People needed healing, people needed jobs, and people needed hope.

Sue Plumb Takamoto went to Ishinomaki to help clear a field of debris. As she did so, she kept noticing colorful shards of broken pottery, strewn everywhere. She and her friends decided to gather the shards. An idea emerged: the broken shards could be smoothed, polished, and transformed into jewelry.

"Nozomi" is the Japanese word for "hope," so they called it the Nozomi Project. Today it is a social enterprise, building community, providing income, restoring dignity,

and generating hope. Nozomi women have been trained to craft one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry featuring those broken pieces of rice bowls and tea cups. Each woman names her line of jewelry, sometimes in honor of a loved one who died in the tsunami. One third of the women in the project are single mothers and grandmothers. Most of them lost their livelihoods, family members, and homes when the tsunami destroyed their world. Now, with the encouragement and support of Christian servant-leaders, they are rebuilding their lives. The Nozomi Project has become a Christian community. Every work day, the women share their lunch, read and discuss the Bible, and pray together.

Sue Takamoto points out that "God can take broken pottery and broken women who think that life is over for them and do anything he wants. We are in the midst of seeing God do amazing things."[10]

Summary

In summary, a life of Christian leadership is a challenging life. The foundation for our life of leadership must be faith, love, and service. We must have an unshakeable faith, and that faith must flow into our deeds. The basis for our deeds should be love and service. We can love and serve our families, friends, and communities. We can love and serve people throughout the world. When we do, we will know that we are following Jesus, living the life we were created to live, and making a difference for the Kingdom of God.

The Question of Power vs Service

Module Two Lecture

Welcome to the second module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." We started the series with the Biblical framework, which makes it clear that we are not to be kings, we are to be servants when we lead. Then in the first module, we discussed faith, love, and service, as the foundation for a life of Christian leadership.

We know that Jesus calls us to serve. We also know that there are many ways to serve, each with its own dignity, meaning, and impact for the Kingdom. One way we can serve is by leading. If we are to serve by leading, we need to adopt a model or approach to leadership that is consistent with Scripture, our faith, and our love for others. So in this module, we will explore ideas about leadership. We need to be clear about what it means to be servants when we lead.

Two leadership models

So, what is leadership? There certainly are a lot of definitions. When I think about leadership, I see two major ideas or paradigms or "models" of leadership in the world today. One I call the power model of leadership. The power model says that leadership is about acquiring and wielding power. It is about making people do things. It is about how to attack and win. It is about coercion and manipulation. The focus is on the leader, who issues orders to his or her subordinates.

The other model I call the service model of leadership. The service model says that leadership is about making a difference in the lives of others. It is about identifying and meeting people's needs. The focus is not on the leader, it is on those being served. People who live this model are often called servant leaders.

There are some simple ways to contrast a power-oriented leader and a service-oriented leader. The first is this: Power-oriented leaders want to *make* people do things. Servant-leaders want to *help* people do things. That's why servant-leaders are usually facilitators, coordinators, healers, partners, and coalition-builders.

Another way to contrast the two models is this. The power model assumes a hierarchy shaped like a pyramid. It assumes that only the people at the top of the pyramid have power, so only they can be leaders. In the service model, the hierarchy doesn't matter. That's because *anybody* in a family, organization, or community can be of service. *Anybody* can identify and meet the needs of others. *Anybody* can be a servant leader.

Problems with the power model

I believe that there does not have to be so much pain and suffering in the world. I believe there does not have to be so much violence, so much starvation and disease. I believe there do not have to be so many crushed dreams and untapped talents, so many problems unsolved and so many opportunities ignored. The world does not have to be like this.

One reason that the world is like this is that many people are using the power model of leadership. It is the dominant model in most cultures, and it has some severe shortcomings.

First, it focuses on having power, not on using it wisely. There is no purpose or moral content. Power is seen as an end, not a means. Second, the power model glorifies and even promotes conflict between power groups. If leadership is about acquiring and wielding power, anyone who wants to be a leader assumes they have to build a power base. So he builds his, and she builds hers, and after a while, you have all these power groups that are paying so much attention to their rivalry with each other, that they have little time or energy to solve problems or seize opportunities. As a result, organizations and communities get stuck, unable to move forward. Third, the power model defines success in terms of who gains more power, not in terms of who accomplishes the most for their group or organization or community. These are severe problems.

Another problem is that the power model is not good for the leader. The power-oriented leader thinks that leadership is about him or her, so the leader stops listening to others, and eventually becomes irrelevant, out of touch with those he or she is supposed to be leading. That can—and should—lead to the loss of the leadership position. Even worse, the power-oriented leader can never get *enough* power. It becomes an addiction, a disease. The leader always wants more and more power. This can easily result in spiritual corruption and even a life of self-torment.

Examples of the power model

There are examples of this in literature and the movies. One example is Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a tragedy set in medieval Scotland. Macbeth is a loyal and courageous Scottish general who defeats an invading army. He encounters a group of witches who prophesy that he will be thane of Cawdor—the Earl of Cawdor—and eventually king, while the heirs of another Scottish general, Banquo, will also become kings in their day.

Then Macbeth learns that as a reward for his victory over the invaders, King Duncan has just made him the thane of Cawdor. With the first part of the prophesy fulfilled, Macbeth's ambition becomes so strong that he abandons all moral constraints. Encouraged by his wife, he murders King Duncan, and then, as a cover-up, blames and

murders two chamberlains. He also hires murderers to kill Banquo, and after receiving further prophesies from the witches, he orders the murders of the wife and children of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman who opposes him. Macbeth becomes a tyrant, feared by all. Lady Macbeth, haunted by all the bloodshed, goes insane and finally commits suicide. Duncan's son raises an army in England, and with the support of other Scottish nobles, his army defeats Macbeth, who is killed by Macduff in combat.

The central theme is that Macbeth wanted power, and his ambition corrupted him. He abandoned his loyalty and morality, and became a murderer. But becoming the king wasn't enough for him. Macbeth became paranoid. He knew that there were others who could take his power from him. He didn't want to give up his power, so he continued killing. Power was addictive, and he could never be at peace.

A modern literary example was provided by Robert Penn Warren, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his brilliant novel, *All the King's Men*.[11] The novel is about the transformation of Willie Stark from a country lawyer with good intentions to a power-hungry politician. He began by fighting the corrupt political machine. He got elected governor and did good things for the people. But his desire for power gradually swallowed his desire to serve, and he became the head of his own corrupt political machine. It is a brooding, unsettling story of a man who set out to serve others and ended by making them serve him instead.

Sometimes, people think they are serving others, but are really using the power model. One example is nurse Ratched in the movie, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,* based on the book by Ken Kesey. Nurse Ratched works in a mental institution. Randle McMurphy, a criminal, is moved to the mental institution not because he is mentally ill but because he wants to avoid hard labor on a prison farm. McMurphy is full of life, and he wants to bring life to the institution, re-invigorating the other patients, and helping them to be healthier and more active.

Nurse Ratched is not amused—she sees McMurphy as a threat. She believes she is serving the best interests of the patients, but she is dominating, manipulative, and focused on her own authority. She uses her power to diminish the patients. In the end, she sends McMurphy for a lobotomy, brain surgery that reduces his mental ability and changes him as a person. McMurphy's friend the Chief discovers him after his lobotomy, and can't bear to see him that way, so he smothers McMurphy with a pillow. We feel the pain and loss when the nurse wins, and McMurphy dies.

The power model does not advance the Kingdom

For power-oriented leaders, power is self-justifying; power is the end they seek. That is why leaders who live the power model are not very effective in meeting human needs or making life better for others. It's not what they are trying to do. It's not their focus. It's not what they care about. Often, they can gain and maintain power while being remarkably indifferent to the needs of others. In fact, a power-oriented leader may feel justified in

making life *worse* for a lot of people, so long as he or she gains power.

Leaders in the power model may ignore or exploit the needs of others, but they are not good at addressing the needs of others. The power model perpetuates fear, war, violence, injustice, starvation, disease, and environmental degradation.

In short, the power model of leadership does not advance the kingdom of God. And we do not help the kingdom of God to break into our world by fighting power with more power. That just leads to more battles, more pain, and more suffering. No—the kingdom of God breaks into our world through love and service, not power.

People say you have to fight fire with fire. Sometimes that makes sense. But there is an alternative, and in the long run, it is a better alternative, and that is to fight fire with *water.* We need to extinguish the addiction to power and replace it with a commitment to service.

Jesus rejected the power model

It comes as no surprise that Jesus rejected the power model outright. Instead, he chose service. Malphurs said that we can sum up the life of Jesus with the one word *service.*[12] One purpose for his incarnation and life on Earth was to model what service is all about. J. Oswald Sanders, in his book, *Spiritual Leadership*, said simply that "Jesus defined leadership as service…"[13] Donald Kraybill said that instead of giving orders and directives, Jesus asked how he could serve.[14]

The teachings of Jesus are very clear. The issue of power and service arose when the mother of James and John approached Jesus and asked that her sons sit at his right and his left in his kingdom. Jesus declined. When the other ten disciples heard what had happened, they were indignant. Jesus then called his disciples together and said:

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:25-28)

A nearly identical passage is found in the Gospel of Mark (Mk. 10:42-45). We find the same message in different words in the Gospel of Luke (Lk. 22:25-26). Thus, all three of the Synoptic Gospels include this key teaching on leadership. Jesus teaches us to not be hierarchical, and he calls us to be servants when we lead.

Malphurs, in his book *Being Leaders,*[15] pointed out that the Greek text for the passage in Mark and Matthew uses two different words for servanthood. One refers to a person who

serves voluntarily, while the other refers to a person who has forfeited his rights and is in a servile position in relation to his lord. Malphurs said that Jesus uses the two concepts to carefully weave together the idea that we *willingly obligate* ourselves to serve.

We need to remember that servanthood is not servitude. Servitude occurs when people are forced to serve. We are not forced to serve. We choose of our own free will to be servants. We choose of our own free will to love and help others. We choose of our own free will to follow the example of Christ. We choose of our own free will to be servant-leaders.

The upside-down Kingdom of God

Jesus wants us to know that the world of power and oppression is not the world that God intends for us. Jesus talked about a very different kind of kingdom—the Kingdom of God. Scholars and theologians agree that the kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus. Over and over again, in statement after statement, Jesus described that "upside down" world of the kingdom.

What is important for our discussion of leadership is that the domination systems of the world do not exist in the kingdom of God. Gone is the abusive power that oppresses or enslaves. In the kingdom of God, love and service replace dominance and command. Gayle Erwin, in *The Jesus Style*[16] said that when you lead in the style of Jesus, you don't use coercion, and you don't depend on your institutional position for authority. Instead, you serve people, and they recognize your leadership and choose to follow.

In his book, *How God Became King,*[17] N.T. Wright said that the idea of servanthood is at the center of Christ's vision of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said that he himself came to be a servant, to give his life as a ransom for many. So servanthood is the core message inside the central message of Jesus—his message about the Kingdom of God.

Resisting the power model

Jesus was clear in his rejection of the power model, but we are surrounded by a secular, commercial culture that promotes the power model every day. Perhaps that is why Christian leaders are tempted to adopt this model. Tony Baron, in *The Cross and the Towel*,[18] said that many church leaders desire the power of the sword and the shield that comes from the secular world instead of the power of the cross and the towel that comes from Christ.

Rinehart observed that there is an epidemic of power leadership in churches and ministry organizations. He said that it is so common that we've lost our immunity to power leadership. As we become more modern and sophisticated, we seem to accept the secular world's management philosophies to accomplish kingdom work. It's as though

we believe that what Christ taught is no longer applicable in our world, that it is an anachronism best left to the dusty roads of Galilee. And yet, this is the kind of thing that the apostle Paul warned us against. In Colossians 2:8, Paul says that we should not allow anyone to take us captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition instead of Christ.[19]

Henri Nouwen, in his book, *In the Name of Jesus*, suggested that power is tempting because it "offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love."[20] It is easier to try to control people than to love people. But we are commanded to love people. We must follow Jesus and reject the power model of leadership.

Power is only a tool

But wait. Let's be realistic. Power abhors a vacuum. *Somebody* is going to exercise power. Can a servant-leader exercise power? Yes, but servant leaders see power as a tool, and they don't use power very often. On the rare occasions in which they must exercise power, they exercise it *with* others, not *over* others, and they exercise it to *serve and protect* others, not to benefit themselves.

Because power is only a tool, great servant-leaders have been willing to give it up when they no longer need it to serve others. Cincinnatus, George Washington, and Jose de San Martin are good examples. All three of them had military and political power. What is significant is that they made the leadership contribution that was needed at the time, and then passed their power on to others.

Cincinnatus was a Roman political leader and general who lived in the fifth century B.C. He is a semi-legendary figure often cited as a model of Roman virtue. He lived a simple life, working on his own farm. When enemies threatened Rome in 458 B.C., the Senate begged Cincinnatus to become the absolute dictator and save Rome.

Cincinnatus was reluctant to become the absolute dictator, because he was needed on his farm. If his crops weren't sown in a timely manner, his family could starve. One can imagine the delegation from the Roman Senate begging him to become the absolute dictator. "What?" Cincinnatus says. "And not plant my crops? Are you kidding? You obviously are not farmers. If I don't plant my crops, my family won't have anything to eat. We'll starve!" But they begged, and he agreed to serve. Organizing the troops, he defeated the enemies in sixteen days. He then resigned his absolute authority and returned to farming, presumably in enough time to plant his crops. He came out of retirement to do the same thing again, twenty years later.

George Washington is sometimes described as a modern Cincinnatus. Washington was a surveyor and a farmer, widely respected as a person of good character who was focused on public service. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army,

president of the Constitutional Convention, and the first president of the United States. He was so admired that if he had wanted to be king, the United States might have become a constitutional monarchy. But that is not what Washington wanted. He didn't want to be king, he wanted to be a public servant. He voluntarily resigned his commission as Commander-in-Chief after the war, and later, after two terms as president, he decided not to run again, giving the nation a successful transition of power. Historian Joseph Ellis said that Washington was "the supreme example of the leader who could be trusted with power because he was so ready to give it up."[21]

Jose de San Martin is another leader who twice gave up his power. Born in 1778 in what is now Argentina, San Martin received a military education in Spain and served in the Spanish Army. In 1812 he returned to Argentina to join the rebels who were fighting to free South America from Spanish rule. Although Argentina was declared independent in 1816, San Martin knew that Argentina would not remain independent if the Spanish still controlled Chile and Peru. In 1817 he joined Chilean leader Bernardo O'Higgins and led an army of 5,000 men on a dangerous march through the snowy Andes mountains to Chile, where they defeated the Spanish. Chile was declared independent in 1818. San Martin declined to be the Chilean president, giving that honor to O'Higgins instead.

San Martin next assembled a fleet and sailed north to attack the Spanish at Peru. In 1821 he declared Peru an independent nation, and was named the governor. When his vision of how to organize the newly independent countries of South America came in conflict with another patriot, Simon Bolivar, who had been fighting further north, San Martin deferred to Bolivar, returned to Argentina, and eventually retired in Europe. Many Argentineans consider San Martin their greatest national hero. He fought for others, not himself, and he gave up his power to others, rather than keeping it for himself.

Embracing the service model

We have discussed the problems of the power model, how it was rejected by Jesus, and how we need to resist it in our own work. Now let's take a closer look at the service model. Living the service model of leadership is the way of Jesus.

The service model of leadership is about serving others, not using others. Servant-leaders don't ask, how can I get power? How can I make people do things? Instead, servant-leaders ask, what do people need? How can I help them to get it? What does my organization need to do? How can I help my organization to do it? Thus, rather than embarking on a quest for power, the servant leader embarks on a quest to identify and meet the needs of others.

In the service model, the servant-leader can set the agenda, call attention to the issues, ask challenging questions, coach and mentor, and join his or her colleagues in meeting the needs that the organization is there to meet. Identifying and meeting the needs of others

gives servant-leaders meaning and satisfaction. It is a way to live one's faith and do what Christ has called us to do. It's a way to make love real.

I have no doubt that love can be made real in the workplace. Let me give you an example—TD Industries, a specialty construction company based in Dallas, Texas. It has been my pleasure to know Jack Lowe, Jr., who for many years was the CEO of the company. Jack is a true gentleman, and he has a great sense of humor. Forty years ago, the company adopted servant leadership as a major part of their culture. Employees have to be good at their work, and they have to be servant-leaders, which to them means helping people to grow. Jack will be the first to say that they have been working on servant leadership for forty years, and haven't produced a perfect servant leader yet. What they *have* created is a caring culture and a profitable company.

TDI's 2,300 employees do nearly $600 million in business every year. The company is on the *Fortune* magazine list of the 100 best companies to work for in America. They have been on the list every year since the list started, so *Fortune* put the company into their Hall of Fame. The company is employee-owned, so they are all in it together. Employees are referred to as "partners" and they make their careers there—retention is very high. This is not a surprise. The mission statement of the company says that it exists to provide great careers for their partners.

Years ago, I spent a couple of days at TD Industries interviewing partners. I found that partners were very committed to the company and to each other. They really cared about each other. Partners knew who they reported to, but they felt most accountable to their peers, the members of their teams. They didn't want to let each other down. And the hierarchy was pretty flat. Senior leaders worked in cubicles like everybody else, and they placed a limit on their own executive salaries.

Years ago, a local TV reporter interviewed partners at TD Industries. The reporter went out to a construction site and interviewed TD Industries partners in their boots and hard hats. My recollection is that the reporter asked one partner about servant leadership. The reporter noted that other people said it was about caring and treating each other right. But the reporter wondered, was it really about love? The partner said, "Love? … no… it's about… I mean…" He stopped, looked puzzled, and then said: "Yeah, I guess you *could* say it's about love."

A network of love

Servant-leadership is not about lording it over others, it is about loving others. N.T. Wright said that our "big story" as Christians is not a power story, it is a love story—the story of God's love, operating through Jesus and then, by the Spirit, through Jesus' followers.[22] We lead with love.

Blanchard and Hodges explained in their book, *Lead Like Jesus,*[23] that to lead like Jesus, you must love Jesus, and you must love *like* Jesus. That means we should always seek to do the loving thing when we work with others.

Rinehart quoted Howard Snyder as saying that "the church is not a chain of command but a network of love."[24] That network of love is based on mutual respect. Would we lord it over people if we respected them? No, we wouldn't. When we respect people, we listen to them, consult with them, include them, and team up with them. Erwin said that we lord it over other people when we don't recognize their value and we don't see them the way Jesus does. When we *do* recognize their value, and view them with respect the way Jesus does, we realize that we can lead by serving, not commanding. Nobody has to lord it over anybody.

A network of love recognizes each person's gifts. These gifts are contributed when the gifts are needed to serve the organization. Rinehart said that what is important is the way members of the family of Christ relate to each other. Those relationships do not emphasize rank.[25] The idea is that we stand shoulder to shoulder, mutually supporting each other. We step up to make our individual contributions, then we step back, and encourage others to make their contributions in turn. Everyone has a role; everyone has a place; everyone can make the contribution he or she is gifted to make. It's not a hierarchy, it's a network of love.

But what about authority? Authority is the right to act—the right to give orders or make decisions. It is possible that legal authority will be an issue if there is disagreement, and the disagreement cannot be resolved through dialogue. However, if you get into a situation like that, you probably need to go back, start again, and reconnect with the mission and your colleagues. If the legal right to act is all you have left as a leader, you have suffered a major breakdown in your relationship with those you lead, and you are not likely to be able to lead them effectively.

Servant-leaders may have legal authority, but they exercise *moral* authority. Moral authority is something that you earn. If people respect you and trust you; if they believe that you have their best interests at heart; if they know that you are a person of faith seeking to advance the kingdom of God, and you are on the journey with them, you can earn moral authority. And if you authentically exercise moral authority, your legal right to act may not matter.

Most important, we need to acknowledge that the ultimate authority belongs to God, and we are God's instruments. When we have authority, we should use it to benefit others, not ourselves. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he referred to his authority as "the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down." We can use authority not to make people do things, but to help people grow in their faith and service.

Leadership experts echo Jesus

I think it is important to note that leadership experts experienced in the world of work have come to conclusions that are consistent with the teachings of Jesus. Robert Greenleaf was one of those experts. He worked for AT&T from 1926 to 1964. During those years, AT&T was one of the largest corporations in the world, with more than a million employees. Greenleaf rose through the ranks to become the Director of Management Research. It was his job to help the leaders and managers of AT&T to become as effective as possible. What he concluded was that the most effective leaders were those who were focused on serving others.

In 1970 Greenleaf published his classic essay, *The Servant as Leader*, which launched the modern servant leadership movement. In that essay, Greenleaf coined the words "servant-leader" and "servant leadership." He defined the servant-leader by saying that the servant leader begins with the natural feeling that he or she wants to serve. Then when the servant sees the opportunity to lead, he or she makes the conscious choice to lead. He said that people who are servant-first are different from people who are leader-first, perhaps because they seek power or wealth.

The difference between the servant-first and the leader-first is that the servant-first makes sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. Greenleaf said that the best test of servant leadership was this: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?"[26]

Greenleaf echoed the call of Jesus to be servants first. When the opportunity arises to serve by leading, then the servant accepts the responsibility and becomes a servant-leader, paying attention to the needs of others, and helping them grow. Greenleaf also echoed Jesus when he shared his concern for the least privileged in society.

James Autry has been a jet fighter pilot, business executive, and poet. After many years leading a major corporation, he listed the things he believes about leadership. In his book, *The Servant Leader*,[27] he wrote that leadership is not about controlling people or being a boss, it is about caring for people and being a useful resource for people, building a community at work, and being authentic. It's about creating a place where people can find meaning in their work, and bring their spirits to work. He said that leadership, like life, is largely a matter of paying attention. Finally, he said that leadership requires love.

Meg Wheatley is an organizational consultant. In *Leadership and the New Science*,[28] she argued that the universe can no longer best be understood as a machine, as in Newtonian physics. Rather, it is best understood in terms of relationships and connections, as in quantum physics. She said that we need to become much better at building relationships.

Those who try to relate to others through coercion, or a disregard of others, create negative energy and bad relationships. Those who are open to others and who see others in their fullness create positive energy and good relationships. She concluded that love in organizations is the most potent source of power we have available.

Perhaps the experts are beginning to understand what Jesus taught us: that we are designed to love and be loved, and that we can achieve what we need to achieve, together, through loving each other instead of lording it over each other.

Summary

In summary, there are two major models of leadership—the power model and the service model. The dominant model in our culture is the power model of leadership, but it has lots of problems. Most important, it does not advance the Kingdom. Jesus clearly rejected the power model. He calls us to be servants when we lead. Servanthood is central to his vision of the Kingdom. The service model of leadership is about identifying and meeting the needs of others, and creating networks of love within organizations. Leadership experts have come to conclusions that are consistent with the teachings of Jesus. They are beginning to understand how much we can achieve through loving each other instead of lording it over each other.

The Characteristics of Servant Leaders

Module Three Lecture

Welcome to the third module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." In the introduction, we shared a Biblical framework for a life of Christian leadership. We learned that we are not to be kings, we are to lead with a servant's heart. The first module addressed faith, love, and service as the foundation for a life of Christian leadership. The second module described the power model of leadership, which Jesus rejected, and the service model, which embodies the teachings of Jesus. In this lecture, we will be talking about the characteristics of servant leaders.

The characteristics of servant-leaders

Servant leadership has become a field of study and practice all over the world. There are a number of servant leadership institutes and centers, and hundreds of colleges teach servant leadership in their leadership courses. Many books and scholarly research articles have been published. Most of them discuss the characteristics of servant leaders.

Jesus is our ultimate example of the servant-leader. How can we describe him as a leader? Jesus described himself by saying: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:14-15).

Michael Youssef, in *The Leadership Style of Jesus*,[29] tells us that he grew up in the Middle East. He was able to observe firsthand the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. He said that the good shepherd is completely dedicated to the welfare of his sheep, making sure that they are safe and well-fed. Day or night, the shepherd is ready to leap into action to protect his sheep. When Jesus says he is the Good Shepherd, he is saying that he is the kind of leader who truly loves his flock and is willing to sacrifice himself for their benefit.

I like to say that a servant-leader is simply *a leader who is focused on serving others.* A servant-leader loves people and wants to help them. The role of the servant-leader is therefore to identify and meet the needs of others.

Aubrey Malphurs in his book, *Being Leaders*, said that servant-leaders have at least four characteristics: humility, service, focus on others, and love. That is why he defined servant leadership as "the *humble service of others based on our love for them*."[30]

James C. Hunter, in his book, *The Servant*,[31] used the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 to create a list of characteristics that he said would result in service and sacrifice as a leader. The characteristics he chose were patience, kindness, humility, respectfulness, selflessness, forgiveness, honesty, and commitment.

Robert Greenleaf made it clear that the most important characteristic is the desire to serve. He also discussed listening and understanding; acceptance and empathy; foresight; awareness; persuasion; conceptualization; self-healing; and rebuilding community.

Scholars establish their own lists of characteristics of servant leadership in order to develop and test theories about the impact of servant leadership in the workplace. For example, Dr. Robert C. Liden and his colleagues identified seven dimensions of servant leadership that they use in their research: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping followers grow and succeed, putting followers first, and behaving ethically.[32]

Some people have difficulty with the words "servant leader," because in most cultures, those two words are the opposite of each other. Servants are assumed to have no power or status, while leaders are assumed to have a lot of power and status.

The best way to explain it is that the foundational word is servant. The most fundamental characteristic of servant leaders is that they have a servant's heart. Servant leaders are servants before, during, and after they hold leadership positions. Servant leaders are sometimes leaders, but always servants. That's who Jesus was. He said "I am among you as one who serves."

Different focus and motivation

Servant-leaders can be government officials, business executives, academic administrators, non-profit leaders, military commanders, coaches, friends, or neighbors. Servant-leaders do most of the things that other leaders do—they articulate a vision, they manage, they communicate, and so forth. What sets servant-leaders apart from other leaders is that they are focused on others, not just themselves, and they are motivated to make life better for others, not just for themselves.

That difference in focus and motivation is easy to see in the decisions that people make every day. A power-oriented leader who sits down to make a decision asks a different set of questions than a servant leader. The power model of leadership is about acquiring and wielding power, so a power-oriented leader will ask questions like this: What decision will enhance my power? What decision will make me look good? What decision will be a great way to get ahead of my chief rival? What decision will improve my relationship with my boss? What decision will position me better for my next promotion? These are all questions focused on the leader who is making the decision.

The service model of leadership is about making a difference in the lives of others, so a servant leader asks a different set of questions. She asks: What are the most important needs we should be addressing? If we address this need, are we going to harm anyone, or leave anyone out? If harm is likely, is there a way to mitigate it? What decision would be most consistent with the mission, values, and goals of my organization? What decision would be most beneficial to the people we serve? Those are not questions about the leader, they are questions about the organization and the people it serves.

Now when you ask these different sets of questions, you get different answers, and over time, the power-oriented leader and servant leader move in different directions. The power-oriented leader moves toward getting the things that she or he wants, while the servant-leader moves toward getting the things that other people need.

Situational leadership

One of the important characteristics of servant leadership is that it is situational. Servant leadership is situational because every situation is a little different. Wilkes points out that Jesus adapted his style of leadership to the context of the situation. He could be gentle as a lamb or as courageous as a lion. He could be a conformist or an iconoclast. He used whatever style of leadership was needed to meet each moment.[33]

This is a key to the effectiveness of servant-leaders. They do not have a single "style" of leadership. They adopt whatever style or method is necessary to address the needs of the individuals and organizations they lead. Servant leadership is not about the style of the leader, it is about identifying and meeting the needs of others. As the needs of others change, the servant-leader changes.

If a leader has only a single style of leading, what he or she does may be appropriate in some situations but not others. There is a saying that anyone who is a hammer thinks every problem is a nail. A servant-leader isn't a hammer. A servant-leader is the whole toolbox. The servant-leader uses whatever tool is most appropriate in the circumstances.

To take two obvious examples, if you are the captain of a ship that is sinking, you need to issue orders to get people into the lifeboats. You should still listen, to make sure the orders you issue are accurate, but your role is to command. That is how you are going to serve best—that is how you are going to save lives. But if you are the chairperson of a committee of volunteers working on a community project, you need to facilitate the discussion and help the group to arrive at a common understanding and commitment to the project. That is how you are going to serve best—that is how you are going to move the project forward.

This need for flexibility applies also to the individuals you lead. Some need more direction, some need less; some need more encouragement, some need less. Servant-leaders adjust their leadership styles so that they can connect with people on the basis

of their needs and their stages of development. Treating everyone the same would mean treating some inappropriately.

Helping others doesn't have to start big

One of the characteristics of servant leaders is that they are willing to do what they can to help others, even if it seems like a small thing. When it comes to making a difference, they know that any difference can be a meaningful difference, so they don't worry about how *big* a difference it will turn out to be.

That's what I like about the parable of the Good Samaritan, who came across a man who was wounded and lying by the side of the road. The Good Samaritan just decided to help the injured man. That was a loving act of service. It was a meaningful thing to do, in and of itself. It didn't have to lead to something bigger. It didn't have to lead to the establishment of an organization, and a regional committee, and a national plan, and an application for major funding. Helping others doesn't have to start big.

Of course, an act of service can lead to something big. An example is George Williams. George Williams was a young man who worked in a draper's shop in London in 1844. He was a sales assistant, and like lots of other young men in London at the time, he worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. At night, he slept in a crowded room over his workplace. Williams noticed that young men like himself had few positive alternatives to life on the streets. So he gathered together a group of other drapers, and they formed a Christian fellowship of young men who were committed to helping each other grow in mind and spirit.

That is all that George Williams was trying to do. But what he did was a good thing, and others liked the idea, and the idea spread. It became the YMCA, which today serves 45 million men, women, and children in 119 countries.

Taking risks

Another characteristic of servant-leaders is that they are willing to take risks in order to serve others. One of my favorite examples is Will Hartzell, a friend of mine who learned that each year contaminated drinking water causes the deaths of millions of people around the world. He made a deep personal commitment to change that.

Will was not a technologist, and he was not an experienced international business person. People told him he wasn't going to succeed—he would just be wasting his time and money. But he was willing to risk his time and money to make a difference in the lives of others. In spite of all the naysayers who said it couldn't be done, he launched his corporation, Safe Water Systems, in 1996.

Will and his team developed solar water pasteurizers that are a simple, low-cost solution to the problem. An early project that left a big impact on Will was in Africa, at the Selian Hospital in Tanzania. The hospital was not able to afford a water disinfection system. That meant that patients could actually contract diseases while at the hospital.

After their equipment was installed, Will was watching the patients as they came to get clean water to drink. One woman was in the hospital because her child was gravely ill. After she filled her water bottle and was headed back to her child, she stopped and looked at Will. Their eyes met in what Will describes as a time-stopping moment. She said something, and then she walked back into the hospital. Will didn't understand what she said, so he asked the nurse. She said, "Thank you. Thank you for giving my child the chance to live." At that moment, Will knew that he would do whatever he could to provide safe drinking water for as many people as possible all over the world.

Now, twenty years later, Will and his colleagues have installed 4,000 solar water pasteurizers and other water purification systems in 53 countries. The result is that 400,000 people in those countries no longer risk illness or death because of contaminated water. Will Hartzell is a servant leader who took the risk, and is now saving lives every day. He's not famous—he's not trying to be famous. Like many servant leaders, he is not seeking recognition, he is just seeking to make a difference.

Giving back

Sometimes, servant leaders benefit from the help of others, and decide to give back. Harriet Tubman is a good example.

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in the early 1820s in Maryland. As a teenage field hand, she was nearly killed when she was hit in the head by an iron weight thrown by an overseer at a fleeing slave. That injury plagued her for the rest of her life. When her owner died in 1849, she traveled the Underground Railroad to freedom in Philadelphia. The Underground Railroad was a secret series of houses, tunnels, and roads set up by abolitionists and former slaves to provide an escape route for slaves from the South to freedom in the North.

With the help of others, Tubman gained her freedom. Then she decided to give back. From 1850 to 1860, she traveled to the South many times and helped hundreds of slaves escape to freedom, including her brothers and parents. She settled many of them in Canada, where they could not be recaptured. Southerners tried to put a stop to her work by putting out rewards for her capture. She was reverently called "Moses" by the slaves she helped to freedom.

During the Civil War, Tubman provided nursing care for black soldiers and newly freed slaves in Union camps. She spied and scouted behind Confederate lines, and even led a military raid on a Confederate outpost, freeing 700 slaves. After the war, she

became a community activist and campaigned for women's rights. Toward the end of her life, she established a home for the elderly on land next to her own house in Auburn, New York. Tubman was a servant-leader who gave back by fighting for the freedom and rights of others.

Taking a stand for what is right

Servant leaders often take a stand for what is right. One of my favorite servant leaders in fiction is Atticus Finch, the father and attorney in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the Pulitzer-prize winning novel by Harper Lee. The story is set in a small southern town during the depression of the 1930s. Atticus Finch, who is portrayed in the movie by Gregory Peck, is a lawyer who defended a black man, Tom Robinson, who was unjustly accused of raping a white girl. In a time of racial passions, the jury ignored the obvious facts. Atticus lost the trial, and Tom, who was certain there was no hope in appealing his conviction, was shot when he tried to escape.

Although Atticus lost the trial, what was important is that he placed himself in service to another, and at great personal risk, he stood for what was right. Those around him respected his quiet courage. Immediately after the jury issued its guilty verdict, Atticus said some reassuring words to Tom, chatted briefly with the court reporter, and then began packing up his books and papers. Members of the black community, who were sitting in the balcony, watched him packing up. One by one, they stood up, in a silent gesture of respect. His daughter was in the balcony with them, and as Atticus turned to leave the courtroom, Reverend Sykes leaned over and said to her: "Miss Jean Louise! Miss Jean Louise! Stand up. Your father's passing!"

Here's a true story about a servant leader who had the courage to stand for what was right.

> In 1945, at the end of World War II, a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps landed in Tsingtao, China. There weren't many Americans around, so he bunked at a local hotel and took his meals with the Nationalist Chinese general who was the leader of the Chinese bandits outside of Tsingtao. The marine captain's assignment was to assist in the arrangements for the surrender of Japanese forces in northern China. His first tasks were to recruit dock workers to unload transports and to secure housing for the marines who would be arriving soon.
>
> It was a time of transition from war to peace, from combat and field conditions to office and barracks duty. Some of the marines who arrived in Tsingtao had spent their careers in combat, and had no experience with barracks duty. One of these, a young, newly promoted marine sergeant, was assigned duty as sergeant of the guard at the barracks in Tsingtao. In that role, he signed for 35 alpaca vests, accepting them as part of the guard property. When relieved of duty the next day,

only two of the vests could be located. Winter was approaching, living quarters were not heated, and the vests were prized possessions. Thirty-three vests had disappeared.

About the same time that the sergeant was signing for the vests, Marine Corps headquarters issued an order requiring strict property accounting. For the previous two years, there had been little or no accounting. The marines were too busy fighting the war to worry about inventories and forms. However, now it was peacetime, new orders were in effect, and the sergeant was brought up on a court-martial for the missing vests.

The captain agreed to serve as defense counsel for the sergeant in the general court-martial case. The captain began investigating and determined that he would have to call to the stand the regimental adjutant, the battery commander, several officers of the day, several sergeants of the guard, the regimental executive, and the regimental commander. He would have to call them because they were on site before, during, and after the vests disappeared. Calling them to the stand would have put each of them in the court-martial record, which would go to Marine Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. for review.

This was a sensitive time for the officers in the chain of command. Many were reservists who were seeking regular commissions after the war. Others were seeking duty assignments that would advance their careers. The captain began receiving phone calls from these officers, asking why he was going to such lengths on behalf of a buck sergeant. The captain was called in to talk with the regimental adjutant, then the regimental executive, and then the regimental commander, all of whom outranked him. Each of the three men suggested that it would be best for all concerned, certainly for the captain, if the captain did not call them as witnesses.

The captain was a reservist, and he wanted a career in the Marine Corps. It was clear to him that upsetting his senior officers was not the way to get a regular commission and continue his career. But he was not deterred. He informed his superior officers that he would have to call them to the stand to establish the facts of the case.

The pressure increased. The marine division threw a party one Saturday night at a hotel, and the captain was invited to attend. Once he got there, he was asked to come in and say hello to the assistant division commander. The assistant division commander talked about the upcoming court-martial and said that he was personally worried about the captain's actions and how they might affect his request for a regular commission. The assistant division commander mentioned that his boss, the division commander, was being kept informed. Following that encounter, the battalion commander also visited the captain to suggest that he ease off.

The captain listened politely to each of them. He knew that his career was on the line, but he didn't think the sergeant was guilty, and he didn't think it was fair for the sergeant to take the fall. Again, he had a decision to make, and he made it. He told the assistant division commander and the battalion commander that he couldn't ease off.

Monday afternoon, the next regular training day, the sergeant came running to the captain's office with astonishing news. He had just come from the barracks, where he had found 33 alpaca vests on his bunk. They weren't Marine Corps vests, but U.S. Navy vests, apparently secured from navy ships in the area. Together, the captain and the sergeant took the vests over to the office of the sergeant of the guard and got a signed receipt. The sergeant of the guard notified the regimental adjutant that the vests had been located and accounted for. The following day, the captain and the sergeant received word that the court-martial would not be held and all charges had been dropped.

The sergeant was promoted again before leaving the Marine Corps a few years later with an honorable discharge. The captain who risked his career to fight for an underdog received the regular commission he sought and rose through the ranks to become a colonel, serving with distinction for thirty years.

Seven or eight years after the Tsingtao court martial incident, the captain was selected to work closely with the man who had been the division commander who was being kept informed about the court-martial. The division commander had become the Commandant—the commanding general of the Marine Corps. The Commandant wanted somebody he could trust. He knew he could trust the captain.

The story had a happy ending, but the courage and the risk were real. I happen to know this story because I know the man who had the courage to take the risk. He passed away many years ago. He was my father.[34]

Misperceptions about servant leadership

Servant leadership is so different from the power model of leadership that it is often misunderstood. Perhaps the biggest misperception is that since it is about serving, it can't be about leading. But servant leadership is about *serving by leading.* Servant-leaders are indeed leaders.

Another misperception is that servant-leaders are soft. They can't make hard decisions. I have known many servant leaders, and they are not soft. I can assure you that they make hard decisions when it is necessary. The difference is the way in which they make those decisions.

For example, servant leaders can fire people. If a colleague is not performing, the servant leader will try to find out why, and will do his best to address the issues. The colleague may need additional training and coaching. If the issues are addressed and the colleague still cannot do the job, the servant leader may try to identify a job that is more suitable for the colleague. If there isn't another job, or another job doesn't work, the colleague will be terminated, and given assistance in finding another job at another organization. Servant leaders love people, and want them to succeed. But if people can't succeed, even with support, the servant leader will let them go.

A similar misperception is that servant leaders are not competitive. Servant leaders are nice, and as the saying goes, nice guys finish last. The assumption is that you have to be mean and tough in order to succeed in our hard-nosed competitive world.

Adam Grant is a professor at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and he did some research on this question. He was intrigued because he came across some very successful people who did not seem to be mean and tough or even competitive in the normal sense of the word.

Grant's research is reported in his book, *Give and Take*.[35] He categorized people as givers, takers, and matchers. The "givers" were basically nice guys who were willing to help others. What Grant discovered is that yes, some givers finish last, but other givers finish first. The difference is that those who finish last spend so much time helping others that they don't get their own work done. Those who finish first are able to help others and still get their own work done.

Grant said that givers are most effective in a team environment, where giving to others makes the whole team more effective. When givers succeed, it causes a ripple effect that enhances the success of people around them. Servant leaders know how to do their own work, help others, and create a ripple effect that moves the whole team forward.

Another misperception is that if you are a servant-leader, people will take advantage of you. Siang-Yang Tan wrote that servanthood is not being a doormat for everyone to walk over and abuse or manipulate. He said that servanthood flows out of obedience to God's will, and God may guide us at times to lay down our lives and sacrifice for others, but at other times to say no without feeling guilty.[36]

My experience is that people won't take advantage of you if you don't let them. Be friendly but be firm. Be clear about the service that you can provide, and the time and resources available to you. Being a servant-leader doesn't mean you have to do other people's jobs or take on additional work, if you do not have the time and resources to do the work well, or you cannot do it without harming yourself or others.

Another misperception is that servant leadership is not results-oriented. Actually, servant leadership is *more* results-oriented than other ideas about leadership. That's

because servant-leaders get *two* kinds of results. First, they obtain the resources needed to continue and if possible expand the work of the organization. Second, they serve their colleagues and customers and make the world a better place.

Comparing servant leadership with other ideas

Scholars study a variety of leadership theories and compare the theories to each other. A reading of the scholarly literature suggests that scholars see four elements that are unique to servant leadership compared with other theories: (1) The moral component; (2) the focus on serving followers; (3) concern with the success of all stakeholders; and (4) self-reflection, as a counter to the leader's hubris or vanity. Let's talk about each of these in turn.

1. The moral component

One of the unique characteristics of servant leadership is that it is ethical. Servant leaders are committed to treating people right. They also create an environment in which people can raise and discuss moral issues. They make it possible for people to challenge moral decisions.

I find it shocking that so many leadership theories do not include ethics or morality. Many leadership theories are about skills or techniques designed to get other people to do things. These skills or techniques can be used for good or ill.

One of the most common theories of leadership today is transformational leadership. It actually began as *transforming* leadership, described in a book by James MacGregor Burns, a historian and political scientist.[37] In his book on political leadership, he described leadership as morality applied to politics. The moral basis was very clear. But scholars like Bernard Bass redefined it as "transformational leadership" and abandoned the moral element as part of the definition. He said that transformational leaders could wear the black hats of villains or the white hats of heroes depending on their values. So the transformational leader could be Hitler, or he could be Gandhi—it didn't matter in terms of the theory.

Well, it matters to servant leaders. The ethical behavior of servant-leaders is embedded in principles that guide them in their daily decision-making, such as: serve people, help people grow, exercise foresight, and care about everyone the organization touches. These guiding principles are not only ethical, they are also effective. They support high performance and exceptional organizational results.

2. The focus on serving followers

Another unique characteristic of servant leadership, as seen by scholars, is that

servant leaders focus on serving their followers. They encourage people to grow so that they can reach their fullest potential. This is good for the followers or employees, who get to grow. It is also good for the organization. When employees grow, it increases the organizational capacity, which increases the organization's ability to serve others. There's an old saying that if you take care of your employees, they will take care of your customers, and your customers will take care of your business. This approach is very different from the approach taken by leaders who feel it is okay to exploit people for the good of the organization.

3. Concern with the success of all stakeholders

Another unique characteristic of servant leadership is that servant leaders define stakeholders broadly to include employees, customers, business partners, communities, and society as a whole. Servant leaders care about everyone the organization touches. That is the only truly ethical position an organization can take. Organizations touch a lot of people, and the organization should care what kinds of impact it is having on everyone, not just a few people. This is different from organizations that just focus on shareholders, or customers, or employees.

4. Self-reflection and humility

The fourth unique characteristic is that servant leaders are able to reflect and put their role in perspective. They know that leadership is not about them, it is about their ability to serve others. Their self-reflection often results in humility.

Humility is an essential characteristic of servant leadership. People who lack humility are focused on themselves, and show little respect for others. They are not willing to listen, and are reluctant to build teams, share leadership, or grow people. They want to be served, rather than to serve. In short, they simply do not do what servant-leaders do.

There is no doubt that Jesus is the ultimate example of humility. As we read in Philippians 2:5-9:

> 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.

We must follow the example of Christ. In 1 Peter 5:5-6 we are instructed:

> All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God

> opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Humility is not about being weak or filled with self-doubt. Blanchard and Hodges explained humility by saying that humble people don't think less of themselves, they just think of themselves less.[38]

Another aspect of humility is emphasizing the importance of others. It is not putting yourself down, it is lifting others up. Humility is understanding that we have important roles, but so do others; we have contributions to make, but so do others; we have things to say, but so do others—and we need to listen to them.

Wilkes said that humility is about having a true picture of ourselves.[39] Erwin agreed that humility is simply seeing ourselves as we actually are, not higher or lower. It is about being honest with ourselves.[40]

The opposite of humility—pride or self-conceit—is a serious problem. C. S. Lewis called pride or self-conceit "the great sin." In his book *Mere Christianity*, he pointed out that Pride is the utmost evil because it is the complete anti-God state of mind. It cuts people off from God.[41]

Humility and effective leadership

Humility allows us to connect with God. It also allows us to connect with people. Malphurs pointed out that egocentric leaders are not likely to be successful, because people don't respect them. People want to follow humble leaders who have the right motives, and don't look down on them.

Laura Reave, in her study of spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness, concluded that while people are fascinated with charismatic personalities, the most effective leaders are often the quiet, humble leaders who stay in the background. By contrast, executives told her than a major cause for their failure was personal vanity and pride. Reave noted that humble leaders don't develop personality cults and seek public attention and devoted followers. Instead, they help people to focus on the goals and values of the organization. They create a strong corporate culture that supports excellence.[42]

The value of humility has been noticed by management experts. Jim Collins, in *Good to Great*,[43] researched successful companies. The most effective leaders, whom he called Level 5 leaders, were humble about themselves while being very ambitious for their businesses. Level 5 leaders did not talk about themselves, they talked about their companies and the contributions of other executives. They were modest about themselves, but had ferocious resolve when it came to doing whatever needed to be done to make the company great.

Merwyn Hayes and Michael Comer interviewed leaders for their book, *Start with Humility*.[44] They found that humility was essential to leading effectively. That's because humble leaders are able to build trust and inspire people so that they want to follow them. Humility helps connect the leader to followers by establishing a common bond of humanity.

Summary

In conclusion, servant leaders have many characteristics, but they begin with the desire to serve. Like Jesus, servant leaders are good shepherds. They are situational. They take risks, they give back, and they stand for what is right. Compared with other ideas about leadership, servant leadership has a strong moral component, focuses on followers, is concerned with the success of all stakeholders, and promotes humility in the leader. Humility makes it possible for servant leaders to build trust and connect with their colleagues. That makes it possible for the leader and the team to move forward and do God's work, whether it be in ministry or the marketplace.

The Key Practices of Servant Leaders

Module Four Lecture

Welcome to the fourth module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." In the introduction, we shared a Biblical framework for a life of Christian leadership. We learned that we are not to be kings, we are to lead with a servant's heart. The first module addressed faith, love, and service as the foundation for a life of Christian leadership. The second module described the power model of leadership, which Jesus rejected, and the service model, which embodies the teachings of Jesus. The third module described the characteristics of servant leaders. In this lecture, we will discuss the key practices of servant leaders.

Servant leadership is practical

Servant leadership is very practical. It works. This comes as a surprise to people who are only familiar with the power model of leadership, not the service model. Those people imagine that an approach to leadership that is based on faith, love, and service cannot be effective in a hard-nosed, competitive world. And yet it *is* effective. In fact, the research so far has concluded that servant leadership is *more* effective than the alternatives.

Blanchard and Hodges point out that Jesus has provided us with a practical and effective leadership model that is for all organizations, for all people, and for all situations. They point out that Jesus knew a lot about the challenges of daily life and work.[45] Scholars note that Jesus spent most of his life as a carpenter, interacting with people in very practical ways. Jesus taught us a way of leading that he knew would bring out our best and help us to bring out the best in others.

Laura Reave is a scholar who reviewed more than 150 leadership studies.[46] She found consistency between spiritual values and effective leadership. She looked at spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, and humility, and the spiritual practices of treating others with respect and fairness, expressing caring and concern, listening responsively, appreciating others, and taking time for personal reflection.

Reave said that all these spiritual values have been linked to quantifiable positive effects for organizations and individuals, including increases in the bottom line of profits. These conclusions are not based on one or two studies. These conclusions are based on 150 studies.

Many organizations using servant leadership principles are successful in the

marketplace. Often they can be found on the *Fortune* magazine list of the best companies to work for in America—companies like Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, Synovus Financial, Aflac, TD Industries, the Container Store, Marriott International, Nordstrom, and Men's Wearhouse.

During the past ten years, leadership scholars have been conducting empirical studies of servant leadership in the workplace. Their research indicates that servant leadership encourages positive organizational citizenship behaviors—the willingness of people to pitch in and help out, even if the tasks are not in their job descriptions. Servant leadership creates a service climate at work, and promotes fairness in the workplace. Employees of servant-leaders are more helping and more creative, which is a competitive advantage.

Servant leadership has been shown to be positively related to employee job satisfaction, employee commitment to the organization, higher levels of job performance, and community citizenship. Servant-leaders are good at building and facilitating effective teams. In short, servant leadership *works*.

There are many practices that help servant-leaders to be effective. They include self-awareness, listening, changing the pyramid, developing colleagues, coaching not controlling, unleashing the energy and intelligence of others, and foresight. We turn now to those key practices.

Self-Awareness

First, self-awareness. Each of us is the instrument by which we lead. If we want to be effective servant-leaders, we need to be aware of who we are and how we impact others. We want our impact to be as positive as possible. To become more aware, we need feedback, and we need time to reflect and pray.

When you are a leader, others are always watching and interpreting what you say and do. To serve others well, you need to know what impact your words and deeds are having on them. That is a challenge, because it is hard to see ourselves as others see us. We know what *we* intend by our words and actions, but that may not be what other people see or understand. We need to know who we are, so we can lead *authentically*. We need to know what impacts we have on others, so we can lead *effectively*.

There are a number of ways we can get feedback. We can ask family members and friends who know us, care about us, and will be honest with us. We can identify mentors, people who are experienced in our field or at work, who can put things into perspective for us. We can take personality profiles, role-play difficult situations, and tape "practice sessions" so we can observe our own behavior more objectively. We can ask our colleagues for a 360-degree evaluation of our performance. We can survey our colleagues on specific ideas or issues. We can bring in facilitators to run focus group

sessions. We can reflect at the end of each day on what happened, and how we behaved, and how others reacted to our behavior.

Servant leaders are not overly self-critical. They simply strive to grow so that they can help others to grow. They seek advice and input about their behavior, their skills, and ways they can become even more effective as servant-leaders.

On a daily basis, we can spend some time alone to reflect and pray. As we know from Scripture, Jesus modelled solitude and prayer. We can follow his example by stepping back, praying, and asking God: How can I best use the gifts You have given me? How can I *grow* the gifts You have given me? What is Your plan for me? What have You taught me so far? Where are You calling me to serve now?

Listening

The second key practice is listening. I think of listening in the broadest sense of collecting information by listening to individuals, or conducting focus groups, or conducting surveys. Listening is how the servant-leader connects with people. It is how the servant-leader becomes relevant. It is the first step in identifying the needs of others. How will you know what people need, if you don't ask and listen?

Robert Greenleaf believed that listening is the premier skill of the servant-leader. He said that "only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*."[47] Servant-leaders don't begin with the answer, the program, the product, the procedure, the facility. They don't begin with their own knowledge or expertise. They begin by listening and asking questions that will help identify the needs of others. What do people say when asked about their needs, their wants, their hopes, their dreams? Servant-leaders try hard to identify needs, before they try to meet them. It is only *after* listening that servant-leaders begin to apply their knowledge and experience to see if they can help. And they never stop listening. They continue to listen as they continue to help.

Taking time to identify needs is moral and respectful. It is also very practical. If a servant-leader is good at identifying needs, he or she will be in a great position to meet those needs. If the servant-leader does in fact meet those needs, the servant-leader will be effective because he or she will be providing relevant programs, products, and services. That means that the servant-leader's organization will have many satisfied customers, clients, patients, members, students, or citizens. The organization will thrive, because the servant-leader listened, and made sure that what the organization offers is what people really *need*.

Listening first can take time up front, but it can save a lot of time later. You listen first to make sure you understand the situation, so that when you act, your actions are relevant. If you act quickly without listening, you may not understand the situation, and you may end up wasting time and effort, or you may even do something disastrous.

Years ago I had the pleasure of spending a couple of days with Dr. Ernesto Sirolli. Dr. Sirolli is one of the world's leading consultants on the topic of economic development. Dr. Sirolli learned at an early age that if he wanted to help people, he had to be quiet and listen.

He tells the story about his first experience in Africa, along the Zambezi river.[48] He was 21, and he was working for an Italian non-governmental organization. They had been given a valley next to the river with rich soil and great potential. They went to teach the Zambians how to do agriculture. So they brought Italian seeds for tomatoes and zucchini, and they tried to get the Zambians to help plant them. The Zambians were not very interested in doing that, even when the Italians paid them.

Well, the tomatoes grew beautifully, much larger than they grew in Italy. Then one night, when the tomatoes were ripe and red, more than 200 hippos came out of the river and ate all of them. The Italians said to the Zambians: "The hippos!" And the Zambians said, "that is why we do no agriculture here." "Why didn't you tell us?" the Italians said. And the Zambians replied, "You never asked." That is when Dr. Sirolli decided to begin by listening.

After that experience, Dr. Sirolli invented an enterprise facilitation system in which he does not initiate anything or try to motivate anybody. Instead he becomes a servant of people who *already* have passion, energy, and imagination. He helps them to identify resources and make connections so that their dreams can come true. Over the years, he and the Sirolli Institute have worked with 300 communities, and have helped entrepreneurs around the world to develop more than 40,000 new jobs. It always starts with listening.

Here's an example of a company that was good at listening. Years ago, when developing a new four-wheel, all-terrain vehicle (ATV), Suzuki Motor Company engineers took prototypes of the ATV to the apple orchards of Washington state and asked the workers to try them out. The engineers watched and listened to the feedback they got from these early users. For example, the workers said they needed a basket for tools and insecticides, so the engineers added a basket. Then they took the prototype to a local Suzuki dealer. He rode off and was away a long time. The engineers began to worry. Did he have an accident? Did the prototype break down? Finally the manager came roaring back into the dealership with a big smile on his face. "That was fun!" he said. "I want to order twenty of these." It was only after listening and testing that the engineers knew that their product was ready to market.

Paul Tillich said that "the first duty of love is to listen."[49] Deep listening makes it possible to dialogue, and dialogue can lead to consensus. Consensus means full agreement before final action.

Full agreement is not always possible, but consensus is always a worthy goal. It is

the best way to find out what most if not all the people really think and feel. It is a way of discovering diverse ideas, facts, interpretations, hopes, fears, and beliefs. It is a way to find out who will be affected by a decision, and what the affect will be. It is a way of discovering roadblocks or problems that can be addressed in advance.

A decision made in this way is more likely to be implemented, because it is respectful of all views, and takes many people and issues into account. Relying on assertive leadership or quickly defaulting to the majority view may be faster, but important facts and issues may be missed. The result can be a poor decision, or a decision that is difficult to implement because of disaffection or problems that arise during implementation—problems that could have been foreseen.

Marvin Bower concluded after many years of experience as a management consultant that listening was one of the problems with "command and control" companies.[50] He said that a high proportion of CEOs in command companies don't listen very well. This turns off people who have valuable information to provide—information that the CEO really needs in order to make a good decision. People don't offer the information because they have learned that the CEO just won't listen. By contrast, leaders who are good listeners not only gain information, they build trust, and trust is essential to effective leadership.

What makes listening so challenging? For one thing, there always seems to be background noise. There are unclear messages and constant interruptions. There are competing tasks, deadlines, and personal issues. It takes a lot of concentration to really listen.

Even when you are able to concentrate, it is not easy. Why? Because others have to be willing to speak up, and not everyone speaks up in the same way. Some people will speak up at office meetings. Some will chat with you in the hallway or coffee room. Some will send you a text, email, tweet, or message on social media. Some will talk during social events. Some will drop by your office. Some will answer survey questions. Some will only speak when asked a direct question. Some will send a message through somebody else. Some will only use body language.

That's why servant-leaders are flexible listeners. They make sure there are many ways for people to speak and be heard. And they look for respectful ways to get input from those who are *not* speaking.

Listening can be threatening. After all, you might hear something that you don't want to hear. You might hear something that causes you to rethink a long-held idea or belief. Listening might change your attitude toward others. It might change your behavior in an important way.

Winston Churchill offered important insight when he said that "courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."[51]

Servant-leaders have the courage to do both.

Changing the pyramid

The next key practice is changing the pyramid. The traditional hierarchy—the pyramid—makes it hard to listen well. People at the top of the pyramid often don't know what those on the front lines know. And information can be blocked at any level of the pyramid so that it never reaches the top.

There are two ways that servant-leaders try to overcome the problem of the pyramid so they can listen better: they flatten the pyramid at the top, or they invert the pyramid.

Robert Greenleaf worked in a huge corporation and was very aware of the problems faced by the leader at the top of a pyramid structure. He said that the person at the top of the pyramid no longer has colleagues, only subordinates. And that makes it hard for the chief at the top of the pyramid to get good information. Subordinates don't talk to their boss the same way they talk to colleagues.

People don't want to say anything that will upset the chief or bring blame to themselves or their colleagues. Nobody wants to bring bad news. As a result, the chief can quickly become isolated. There are some things that everybody knows except the chief, because nobody will tell the chief. It is also hard for the chief to test out new ideas, because nobody wants to tell the chief that her idea is a bad one. It is hard to get honest feedback. Over time, the chief may begin to think she is always right, because nobody is contradicting her.

The solution? The pyramid can be flattened at the top, at least informally, by bringing together senior leaders who are committed to the mission and to each other. Ask them to share all the information they have, from all their various sources, so the team can listen broadly and widely. After examining the information and discussing the issues, the best decision is likely to become obvious to everyone. In any case, the chief is likely to make a better decision than if the chief had acted alone.

One of the characteristics of a pyramid is that people tend to look up at their boss to make sure they are keeping their boss happy. Paying attention to your immediate manager or leader is fine, but if everyone is only looking *up*, who is looking *out* at the customer, client, patient, member, student, or citizen—whoever it is that the organization was created to serve? Paying attention to your customers is essential to your organization's ability to fulfill its purpose and obtain the resources to continue its work.

In order to focus on those served, servant-leaders often talk about inverting the pyramid, turning it upside down so that the "boss" is on the bottom and those served are on the top. Instead of looking up at their bosses, people look up at their subordinates and their customers.

Organizations with inverted pyramids use many methods to learn about the needs and desires of those they serve. They conduct interviews, focus groups, surveys, product testing, and internet-based feedback from users. Servant-leaders in these organizations listen to colleagues, front-line employees, customers, business partners, investors, creditors, communities—everyone the organization touches.

Developing your colleagues

The next key practice is developing your colleagues. Each of us has gifts, and each of us is unique. Helping others to grow and develop their unique potential is a sacred task. Servant-leaders give it high priority.

It is hard to imagine a more dramatic example of growing people than the way Jesus helped his disciples to grow. They were not experienced leaders, or preachers, or educators, or public relations gurus. They were not wealthy, or well-connected, or highly educated. At the time Jesus chose them, they were what people of their day would have described as "ordinary." They were fishermen, a tax collector, and a zealot. Furthermore, they were not especially quick to understand Jesus. They had to keep asking him what he meant. They argued among themselves. One of them actually *betrayed* him.

Erwin said that the disciples were not what a talent scout of the time would have considered a "dream team." He said that Jesus picked out the strangest crew ever to be sent out on a mission to change the world.[52] And yet, after the resurrected Jesus appeared to them, the disciples did indeed *change the world*. They became articulate towers of strength, energized and unwavering in their faith. They suffered and died for Christ. And in the process, they launched Christianity.

Jesus lived with them, taught them, and modelled servant behavior for them. He challenged them, prodded them, prayed for them, and loved them. He prepared them for what was going to happen, and what they were going to do. When the time came, *they did it*. And we are in their debt today.

Barnabas introduced Paul to the other disciples, and asked Paul to help him in his early work of sharing the good news. Paul in his turn sought to grow Christian communities, and mentored individuals such as Timothy. Down through the centuries, Christian leaders have grown Christian communities and other Christian leaders.

Robert Greenleaf thought that growing people is the most fundamental business of any organization. He said that "the work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work."[53] The work should be meaningful to those who are doing it. One way to make it meaningful is to help people grow. That is why Greenleaf concluded that whatever line of work an organization may be involved in, the most fundamental business of every organization is to grow people.

Developing people is a key strategy for organizational success. When people grow, the capacity of the organization grows. When the capacity of the organization grows, it can do things better, or do things it was never able to do before. Individuals benefit, the organization benefits, and those served benefit. It's a triple win.

In *The Effective Executive*, Peter Drucker told the story of a company president whose contribution was the development of young managers at a large chain of retail stores. He was a "financial man" who had faithfully served in the number two slot in the company. When the CEO suddenly died, he became the new president. Even though he preferred working with numbers, he concluded that he could make the biggest difference by developing the company's young managers.

So three times a week he walked through the personnel department after lunch and picked up eight or ten file folders at random—the folders of young managers. When he got back to his office, he reviewed the folders and made phone calls to the supervisors of the young managers. According to Drucker, the conversation would go something like this:

> 'Mr. Robertson, this is the president in New York. You have on your staff a young man, Joe Jones. Didn't you recommend six months ago that he be put in a job where he could acquire some merchandising experience? You did. Why haven't you done anything about it?' And down would go the receiver.[54]

The president also called to congratulate supervisors for making sure that their young managers got the experience they needed to continue growing. Drucker said that this man was president for only a few years before he retired. But ten or fifteen years later, executives who never met him were still giving him credit for the tremendous growth and success of the company since his time. He simply focused on developing people.

One way to make sure that people are growing is to sit down with them and establish an "Individual Development Plan." Ask employees: How do you want to grow? What do you want to learn? What future do you aspire to? How can we help? The plan can include new experiences, seminars, travel, field trips, team-building exercises, skills training, formal education, and/or new positions within the organization. Monitor the plan on a regular basis. Make sure that people are growing!

Coaching, not controlling

The next key practice is coaching, not controlling. Coaching is a good way to develop people. We can bring out the best in people by engaging, inspiring, and coaching them. Instead of a "chain of command," we can lead through a "chain of coaching."

Coaching can involve teaching the mission, values, and responsibilities that colleagues

need to understand in order to do their jobs well. Coaching should involve regular feedback on performance—what the person is doing well, and what the person can do better. Constructive criticism is important because it is an opportunity for "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). Specific, behavior-focused comments are most useful.

When a colleague asks for help, the best way to coach may be to ask questions, so that the person you are coaching can find his or her own answers. Sir John Whitmore, in *Coaching for Performance*, said that coaching is helping people to learn rather than teaching them.[55] Give your colleagues another perspective, a different way of seeing things, and you can help them grow.

I have been fortunate to have a number of mentors and coaches over the years. One who has helped me for decades is Rev. Donald Asman, who was the pastor at my church, Manoa Valley Church, in Honolulu. Pastor Don has a wonderful way of listening. After lots of listening, he asks questions for clarification, and then he asks questions that get me thinking about options, choices, and different ways of viewing the issues or challenges. He doesn't tell me what to do. He creates an environment in which I can think—and pray—about what I should do. Often, I don't understand his questions at the time he asks them. It may be weeks or months before I fully understand. But when I do, I have one of those "aha!" moments that are truly a blessing.

Servant-leaders focus on coaching instead of controlling. While rules and regulations are necessary, they don't bring out the best in people. Micro-managing, or focusing on compliance, often kills the initiative and commitment of those you are leading. Kouzes and Posner, in their book, *A Leader's Legacy*, said that the more you try to control others, the more likely it is that they will rebel. On the other hand, outstanding leaders have told them that they get the greatest commitment from their colleagues when they let their colleagues go—when they give them the freedom to make more of their own decisions.[56]

When you focus on serving people instead of controlling them, you focus on reaching people's hearts and minds. You spend time getting to know people. You learn about their hopes and dreams. You learn why they joined the organization or volunteered to participate. You learn about their work, and their goals, and how they see their roles. You learn how to facilitate the dreams of others. You learn how to coach people so they can grow in their capacity to serve.

Unleashing the energy and intelligence of others

The next key practice is unleashing the energy and intelligence of others. Once people are trained and coached, they should be unleashed to make their fullest contribution to the organization. Your goal as a servant-leader should be to leave behind other servant-leaders who can continue the important work of the organization. That will only happen if people are unleashed.

Jesus knew how to do this. He mentored his disciples, and then he began to send them out on their own. We read at Mark 6:7-13:

> Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. These were his instructions: 'Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.' They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

People need the experience of being unleashed. Everyone is there, at the office, at the plant, at the church. Why not engage everyone to the fullest? Why not let everyone make the highest and best contribution they can make to the work of the organization? This is about advancing the kingdom of God. Why hold anyone back?

If you help your colleagues grow through training and increasing responsibilities, and coach them along the way, then they should understand the mission of the organization and their roles in fulfilling it. They should be aligned with the organization's values, and should have the skills, the resources, and the knowledge to do their jobs well. If so, they are ready for more responsibility. They are ready to make more of their own decisions about what needs to be done, when, and how.

Ken Melrose provides a good example of how to unleash the energy and intelligence of others. Melrose helped unleash his colleagues at Game Time, a subsidiary of the Toro Company that manufactured playground equipment. In 1973, at the age of thirty-two, Melrose was hired to lead the company.

The previous CEO was the founder of the company, and he made all the decisions. So when Melrose became president, the staff came to him, asking him questions and expecting *him* to make all the decisions. He declined. Instead, he asked them questions. If the staff member wanted to know how much steel to purchase for the production of new merry-go-rounds, Melrose would ask him how much they bought in the last period, and how many merry-go-rounds they built with that amount of steel, and how many merry-go-rounds the sales manager thought they could sell in the next period, and how many merry-go-rounds they already had in stock, and so forth. He didn't tell them to do it on their own, and he didn't give them his own answer. Instead, for three years, he coached them with the questions until they could see how to work out the answers for themselves.

What was the result? During those three years, people began to enjoy their jobs. They had more confidence, more trust in each other, and they experienced better team work. Their sales increased 50 percent, their profits more than doubled, and Game Time was yielding the best return on investment of all of Toro's divisions. Later, in the early

eighties, when the parent company was about to collapse, the board asked Melrose to become the CEO of all of Toro. He applied servant leadership principles in rebuilding and growing the company during the next twenty-two years.

Foresight

The last key practice we will discuss is foresight. Robert Greenleaf said that "foresight is the 'lead' that the leader has."[57] If you aren't exercising foresight, you really aren't leading—you are just reacting. And if you are just reacting, you may run out of options, get boxed in, and start making bad decisions, including unethical ones. A failure of foresight can put an organization in an unfortunate situation that might have been avoided. That's why Greenleaf referred to foresight as the central ethic of leadership.

Kouzes and Posner, in their book, *The Truth about Leadership*, emphasized the importance of foresight. They said that the ability to imagine and articulate exciting future possibilities is the defining competence of leaders. Kouzes and Posner surveyed thousands of people about what qualities or characteristics they want most in leaders they would willingly follow. The quality of being "forward-looking" ranked second, right after honesty.[58] Foresight is important to those you lead.

For people of faith, foresight is about spiritual discernment, the effort to understand God's will and engage in the true work of God. It draws upon the spirituality, intellect, imagination, and beliefs of those involved.

While foresight is important, it is difficult to describe and hard to practice. Wilkes said that it is the ability to read current events and thus have a strong sense of what the future may bring. Great leaders take present circumstances and develop potential scenarios about the future. In the process, they seem to see what no one else can see.

Robert Greenleaf said that to practice foresight, one needs to see "now" as part of a moving concept that includes the past, the present moment, and the future. That means you need to be a historian, contemporary analyst, and prophet all at the same time. It requires being involved in the real world, but also detached, able to see what is happening in the perspective of a long sweep of history, projected into the indefinite future. Obviously, this is not easy.

To exercise foresight, we need to watch and listen. We can track changes in the natural environment and changes in technology. We can study data on economic, social, political, and demographic trends. We can network with others and listen to their views of the future. We can pray, and we can look for the "signs of the times," to see if we can understand what God is doing. We can interpret what those signs mean to our organization, region, country, and the world. And we can take action based on prayer, facts, and intuition. We can work with our colleagues and communities to prepare for the future that God is shaping for all of us.

Summary

In summary, servant leadership is very practical. It works. Jesus taught us a way of leading that brings out our best and helps us to bring out the best in others. There is plenty of empirical research that demonstrates that servant leaders are indeed effective in the workplace. There are key practices that help them to be successful in a way that benefits employees, customers, and society at large. Servant leadership is a highly effective way to answer Christ's call to love and serve others.

Building Communities to Serve

Module Five Lecture

Welcome to the fifth module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." So far in the series we have provided a Biblical framework for a life of Christian leadership, and discussed faith, love, and service as the foundation for Christian leadership. We compared the power model of leadership, which Jesus rejected, with the service model, which embodies the teachings of Jesus. We have reviewed the characteristics of servant leadership, and the key practices of servant leaders. In this lecture, we will talk about organizational communities and institutional operating principles.

Organizational forms

A great deal of good can be done by individual servant leaders, working on an informal basis, addressing needs as they arise. But a great deal of good can also be accomplished by joining an organization or forming an organization, and building it in the hope that it will continue to do God's work far into the future. The life of an organization can be longer than the life of an individual.

Any form of organization can be used to serve others. It can be a sole proprietorship, partnership, non-profit organization, for-profit organization, or government agency. It can be a social business or "benefit corporation," known as a B Corporation.

The type of organization you select may depend on the best way to get the resources you need to do God's work. If you and your friends have money to get started, you may wish to set up a sole proprietorship or partnership. If there are donors ready to help, and you can charge fees for services, you may wish to form a non-profit organization.

If the best way to raise money is by issuing shares to the public, you may wish to form a for-profit corporation. If you want to make sure that shareholders understand that they are only one group of stakeholders you will be serving, you may wish to establish a social business or a B Corporation.

If the work you want to do is within the role of government, you may wish to support legislation to expand the duties of an existing agency or create a new one, and then get the needed funds appropriated. Pick the form of organization that seems best suited to establish and sustain the service you believe you are called to provide.

If you focus on meeting the needs of others, you will find that the legal form of your organization is not a limitation. For example, some non-profits have created for-profit businesses to supplement their income or create jobs for those in need. Bill Shore, in *The Cathedral Within*,[59] described non-profit organizations that established businesses to create jobs for the poor, the disabled, or former prisoners who needed jobs so they could start a new life.

Meanwhile, some corporations classified as "for-profit" corporations have become "social businesses." Social businesses operate like other businesses, except that they are "cause driven" rather than profit-driven. The purpose of a social business is to solve social and environmental problems. For example, a social business could sell high quality food products at low prices in order to meet the nutritional needs of poor children. Or it could develop renewable energy systems and sell them at low prices to rural communities that have no energy supply. The profits can be used to pay back investors and to grow the business.

Needs versus purposes

It is important to distinguish between organizational needs and purposes. You must get the resources to do the work, and you must generate a surplus, earn a profit, or obtain government appropriations to continue doing the work. That's an organizational *need*. But getting resources is not the organization's purpose. The *purpose* of the organization is to serve others. The purpose of a Christian organization is to do God's work.

There are people in the for-profit world who think that the purpose of their organization is to make money. I don't agree. If that is true, then the purpose of a government is to collect taxes, the purpose of a non-profit organization is to collect donations and fees, and the purpose of a university is to collect tuition. They all have to do that—they all need the resources to operate. But that is not their *purpose*. The purpose of every organization is to serve others.

How will you measure the success of your organization? While you must obtain the resources to continue and if possible expand your work, the measure of your success as a Christian organization will not be financial. The measure of your success will be the people you have loved and helped. It will be the critical human needs you have met. It will be the lives you have changed, and the lives you have saved. It will be how well people have fulfilled their sacred potential as human beings. It will be how many people have grown toward God. It will be the quality of your organization as a Christian community.

Your organization as a Christian community

For thousands of years, people have come together and formed communities for

mutual support. The description of the early Christian community in Acts 2:42-47 is deeply inspiring:

> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold their property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

My wife and I came across a Christian community like this when we visited Myanmar several years ago. We met the Thang family, whose members are the leaders at New Hope Myanmar Church in Yangon. We had the opportunity to talk with Esther Thang, a graduate of Pacific Rim Christian University, who was leading the PacRim Bible Institute in Yangon.

Esther told us that in 2008, some members of their church passed away due to AIDS, and left their children behind. There was nobody to take care of them, so Esther's mother brought them to stay with the Thang family.

About a year later, Esther's mother decided to start a children's house for the kids whose families were part of the church. Some of the children were from divorced families. Others had parents, but their parents didn't have enough money to take care of them. Some of the children were from the countryside, and didn't have access to schools. The number of kids grew until the Thang family was taking care of twenty of them. Their children's house had become an orphanage, with children ranging in age from 5 to 14. The children are provided with food, clothing, school expenses, and love.

Esther said that it is hard to give the children all the attention they need, but she and her two brothers and one of her cousins help tutor the kids so they can succeed in school. With a family of five, twenty children in the orphanage, and Bible students coming and going, the Thang family compound is a busy place. Esther laughed and said: "It's like a party every day."

Broetje Orchards

The goal for Christian servant leaders is to make their organizations into that kind of community. That's what Cheryl and Ralph Broetje have done. They have made their business into a Christian community, guided by the principles of servant leadership.

Broetje Orchards is a family farm founded by Ralph and Cheryl in 1968. Today their

company has over 6,000 acres of apple and cherry orchards and 2,500 employees in the state of Washington. They pack 28,000 boxes of apples per day—more than 5 million per year. They donate 75% of their profits each year to their foundation, which helps people in need all over the world. The Broetje's have combined faith and business into a single mission.

The Broetjes seek to honor these verses from the Gospel of John:

> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other. (Jn 15:16-17)

These verses of Scripture are the source for the company's official mission statement: "to be a quality fruit company, committed to bearing fruit that will last." The company's brand name is First Fruits.

It all began with a dream. When Ralph was fifteen, he heard a missionary from India speak about the suffering of children there. He thought it would be great to have an orchard and help kids like that some day. In 1968, Ralph and Cheryl borrowed money to buy an orchard, and spent years developing the orchard and paying off their debts. Things were going according to plan until 1979, when the people available to work in their orchard changed suddenly. One reason was that the Iran oil embargo drove up gasoline prices to the point that U.S. migrant families stayed home instead of following crops around the country. In their place, young Latino men began showing up for work.

The Broetjes travelled to Mexico to try to learn more about the in-migration of workers to the United States. They discovered that many migrants had been forced off their lands because of a lack of water, inadequate roads, or no accessible markets for their produce. There was also oppression and political violence. Ralph realized how hard it was for people there to dream about achieving anything, because the opportunities did not exist. Ralph and Cheryl came to believe that the dream Ralph had at age fifteen was now becoming real in their lives. The difference was that the people they were to serve first were not children in India, but their own employees.

They knew that public sentiment was largely against Latino immigrants. And yet, they felt God calling them to live out Biblical principles. Those Biblical principles were from the Old Testament. Leviticus says:

> When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. (Lev. 19:33-34)

This teaching is repeated in Deuteronomy:

> He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. (Dt. 10:18-19)

The Broetje's understood that the migrant lifestyle was not good for the workers or their families, so they redesigned the work so that more of it was year-round, reducing the need for their workers to be migrant. Meanwhile, they literally built a community for them. They built affordable housing, a chapel, and a preschool and elementary school that provide quality Christian education. They established scholarships so children could go on to college. They trained their employees so that they could assume more and more responsibility and become managers and leaders in their own right. They summarize it this way: they built a community that cares for the business that cares for the community.

It's a big business, and it has been a profitable business, so Ralph's dream has come true. With the profits generated by their business, they are not only serving children and their families in India, they are working with others to build better societies at home and around the world.

I have had the pleasure of meeting Cheryl Broetje and listening to her talk about their work. I was especially touched to learn that she and Ralph adopted children from India and have sought out the homeless to teach them skills and offer them employment. One homeless man they found living under a bridge has worked hard over the years and is now one of their managers.

The Chiang Mai massage parlor

A few years ago my wife and I visited Chiang Mai, Thailand, an ancient cultural capital. We stayed at a small hotel that could best be described as an adult hostel—friendly staff, good food, great location, and very simple accommodations, all for a very low price. There was a cross over the entrance, and a plaque of the Last Supper inside the hallway near the kitchen. We noticed that a number of Christian missionary groups stayed there.

After a day in museums and art centers, we decided that our feet had earned a massage. We heard that there was a small massage parlor near the hotel. We found it, and learned that all the women who worked there had been prisoners. They were taught the art of massage in prison so that they could earn a living when they finished serving their terms. A Christian founded the massage parlor to give them jobs. He also gave them a community.

The massage began on the front porch with the washing of our feet. We then went inside, and found half a dozen women giving customers their massages, while chatting, laughing, and helping each other. The older women seemed to be offering suggestions

to the younger ones. We quickly understood that it was not a massage parlor, it was a community, and we became part of it, talking and laughing along with them. They took good care of our tired feet, but they did much more. They lifted our spirits.

Building a community at work

In his book, *The Concept of the Corporation*, Peter Drucker argued that the big business corporation is America's representative social institution. He said that its social function as a community is as important as its economic function as an efficient producer.[60]

More recently, Henry Mintzberg has argued that an important crisis in organizations is the decrease in a sense of community. That's a serious problem because a sense of community is the social glue that binds people together for the greater good. Mintzberg said that a sense of community means caring about our work, our colleagues, and our place in the world. That kind of caring should inspire us. He said that we need good leadership, but we also need more "communityship."[61] We need more emphasis on the importance of the entire organizational community, not just the leaders at the top of the pyramid.

There are lots of ways to build a community at work. Respect people, include people, and share information with people. Emphasize teamwork and cooperation. Celebrate milestones in the work of the organization. Celebrate milestones in the lives of individuals, such as birthdays, weddings, and graduations. Create social events that allow people to get to know each other better. Help people out during difficult times, such as sickness, or the death of a loved one. Show every member of the organization that she or he is appreciated as part of the community.

Simon Sinek, in his book, *Leaders Eat Last,* says that leaders should create circles of safety in which people have each other's backs. When the sense of community is strong, members of the organization can work together without having to spend time and energy protecting themselves from each other. They feel part of the group; they feel like they belong. They feel valued by colleagues and cared for by superiors.[62]

A circle of safety builds trust and supports cooperation and innovation. People naturally share ideas, and share the burdens of stress. The organization is more effective because it is better able to face dangers and seize opportunities in the world outside the organization.

Institutional operating principles

In addition to building organizations as communities, servant leaders make sure that their organizations are servant-institutions. Over the past century, organizations have come to have a bigger and bigger impact on our quality of life. When institutions truly

serve others, they make the world a better place. Servant leaders make sure that their organizations truly serve.

There are many operating principles that can guide servant-leaders who are responsible for the service provided by an entire organization. Here are eight of those principles:

- Reach agreement on the organization's purpose and desired outcomes
- Serve employees
- Serve customers
- Strengthen partnerships
- Serve communities
- Build and facilitate teams
- Develop an effective board
- Grow servant-leaders

We will take a look at each of these principles in turn.

1. Reach agreement on the purpose and outcomes

First, reach agreement on the organization's purpose and desired outcomes. What is your mission? What is God calling your organization to do? Your organization needs to know why it exists and who it is there to serve. You need to know your purpose and the outcomes you seek.

Robert Greenleaf emphasized the importance of a unifying dream. He said that institutions work better when it is not the leader but an idea or dream that is foremost. It is the idea or dream that unites people.[63] The role of the leader is to serve that idea or dream, bringing people together to fulfill it.

Simon Sinek wrote a book titled, *Start with Why.*[64] He said that your "why" is your purpose, cause, or belief. That purpose can inspire you and others—it's why you get out of bed in the morning and look forward to going to work. Successful organizations connect with others by sharing their "why," not just their "how" and "what."

2. Serve employees

Next, serve employees. I suggest that you start by committing to their success the day they join the organization. I don't believe in putting new employees on probation. It doesn't make sense to me to evaluate applicants and then hire the best applicant and then tell the new member of the team that you aren't sure he or she is going to make it, so you are going to stand back and watch for three months or six months before you make a commitment to him or her. You should make that commitment on day one, and then do all you can to make sure that the new team member succeeds. If the new team member is

doing poorly, you can provide advice and training. If the new team member still cannot do the job, you can help him or her find another job. But you should start with full commitment to the new team member's success.

There are a number of things you can do to serve employees. Provide positive working conditions and appropriate equipment. Tailor employee benefits to meet specific employee needs. Set up regular systems for receiving employee input. Provide training and continuing education. Set up individual development plans for each employee. Offer promotion opportunities from within. In short, help employees to do their best and grow in service to others.

3. Serve customers

Next, serve your customers. Your organization was *created* to serve customers, clients, patients, members, students, or citizens. The purpose of your organization is to meet their needs. To do that, you must do a lot of listening.

Listen to your customers during the creation of programs or products, to make sure that you are truly meeting their needs. Listen to them when they use your program or product, to get their reactions and perceptions. How well does the program or product work for them? Report back to customers regarding the actions you have taken as a result of their input. Respond to customer complaints by working with the customer to reach solutions. Make sure you are really serving your customers.

Starbucks is one of the most successful companies in the world. According to a number of sources, Starbucks has made it a habit to sit down and listen to people who have complaints about their products or stores. They listen to the complaints and ask people for their suggestions to make things better—suggestions that are often positive and can be implemented so that their service improves.

4. Strengthen partnerships

Next, strengthen partnerships. No organization exists without vendors or suppliers, and most organizations have donors, investors, or creditors. Strengthen your partnerships with them for mutual benefit.

Listen to vendors or suppliers to understand their needs. Listen to donors, so that you will understand them and can help them to fulfill their values and dreams through their support for your organization. Provide accurate information to investors, creditors, and the general public. Your organization relies on many other individuals and organizations. You can't fulfill your mission without them. Make sure you work together as partners.

Johnsonville is a sausage company. They sell their sausages through a variety of

grocery stores. Years ago, I learned from a Johnsonville company leader that they often send their employees to spend time at stores that sell their sausages. They want their employees to interact with store employees and customers, to see how the sausages are displayed, and to learn how they can improve pricing, packaging, and advertising to promote more sales. It's a partnership that works for Johnsonville, the store, and the customer.

5. Serve communities

Next, serve communities. Your organization should have a positive impact on the community in which it is located. Identify the needs of your community, and work with individuals and community groups to help meet those needs. Encourage employees and business partners to volunteer time and expertise to the community. Give employees time off for community service. Provide direct financial support to community groups or events as appropriate.

For-profit businesses can serve communities just as surely as non-profit organizations or government agencies. A number of years ago, I was asked to conduct a workshop in Estonia for the Tolaram Group. The company originated in India, but is based in Singapore, and has operations in Estonia and Nigeria. The company is serious about corporate social responsibility, and contributes to the communities in which they have business operations. For example, in Estonia they provide mentally challenged children the opportunity to learn, play, and enjoy music. In Nigeria they provide artificial limbs to people who have lost limbs as a result of accidents, illness, or birth defects.

I met Vikki Pryor when she was CEO of an insurance company in New York City. One of her goals was to provide financial services for working people and the less affluent. The idea was that *all* people should have access to high quality, fairly priced insurance products, along with good customer service.

Vikki believes that God has given gifts and talents to everyone, so she embarked upon a strategy to train and empower the existing employees, many of whom were hired from the communities the company was serving. As a result, employees were able to earn a living by serving others from their own community. Life in the community was improved by providing jobs *and* financial services.

As the company evolved and grew, the culture of service and volunteerism flourished. Customers reported satisfaction levels over 95% year after year. Employees participated in fundraising walks, food and clothing drives, and community service days. Employee satisfaction was tracked, and it was learned that 87% planned to stay with the company through retirement.

6. Build and facilitate teams

Next, build and facilitate teams. Marvin Bower was managing partner of McKinsey & Company, a management consulting company, for sixteen years. Looking back on his career, he concluded that a business should be run by a *network* of leaders. Leadership teams could run a business more effectively than a hierarchical, command-and-control structure.[65]

Wilkes said that servant leaders serve best when they team with others to accomplish the mission. What are the advantages of teams? Teams are superior to individual effort because teams have more resources, ideas, and energy than an individual. Teams don't depend on the strengths of just one person, but on a variety of strengths from many people. Team members provide different perspectives, share the credit and the blame, and keep each other accountable for the goals. Above all, teams are how Jesus did ministry.

Jesus taught us to not be hierarchical—to not lord it over others. Teams are a great way to flatten the hierarchy. Teams need a facilitator to help the team to function effectively. But teams are not hierarchical in the way they operate, so that all ideas can be expressed and taken seriously.

In today's organizations, no one person can know everything that needs to be known to make wise decisions. Team members committed to the organization and to each other can make wiser, more effective decisions than any one leader.

7. Develop an effective board

Next, develop an effective board. Each corporation, for-profit or non-profit, has a board. By law, the board has all the legal authority to manage the corporation. To exercise that authority well, boards should lead or initiate, not just react. They should not just rubber stamp the decisions of the administration.

Board members should be thought leaders. They should be in touch with social, economic, environmental, and political trends. They should be servant-leaders who understand the needs of those being served.

Effective boards have members who are diverse in their backgrounds. They have a passion for the mission of the organization, and they contribute a significant amount of time, talent, or treasure to the organization's success. They offer the administration new ideas, connections, and resources. They are team players, but they are not afraid to speak up. They ask provocative questions and provide a safe climate for reflection and discussion.

8. Grow servant-leaders

Finally, grow servant leaders. The key to implementing the institutional operating principles is simple: you will need lots of servant-leaders. That's why servant-leaders grow more servant-leaders.

Start by looking for servant leadership characteristics in job applicants. Kendal Corporation, which operates retirement communities, is an example. Kendal Corporation requires job applicants to read about and discuss servant leadership during the application process.

After hiring, provide servant leadership training for all employees and encourage them to be servant-leaders. TD Industries, a specialty construction company based in Dallas, requires servant leadership training within the first few months after each employee joins the firm.

When reviewing performance, include servant leadership practices in the competencies that are the basis for compensation and promotion. For example, the United States Veterans Administration developed a 360-degree assessment tool that includes servant leadership competencies. The tool is designed to be used to assess the performance of 20,000 VA leaders.

In developing your servant leaders, make sure servant leadership is embedded in your organizational culture. Above all, make sure that organizational leaders *model* servant leadership. It is hard for some people to understand what servant leadership is about, until they see a servant-leader in action.

Summary

In summary, any form of organization can be used to serve others. Whatever form is used, the organization can become a Christian community. That Christian community should be a servant-institution, focused on serving its customers and society at large. There are institutional operating principles that guide servant leaders as they lead their institutions to truly serve others. These principles help servant leaders to enhance the quality of life and advance the kingdom of God.

Leading Organizational Change

Module Six Lecture

Welcome to the sixth module of the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." So far in the series we have provided a Biblical framework for a life of Christian leadership, and discussed faith, love, and service as the foundation for that life. We examined the power model of leadership, which Jesus rejected, and the service model, which embodies the teachings of Jesus. We reviewed the characteristics of servant leadership, and the key practices of servant leaders. We explored organizational communities and institutional operating principles. In this lecture, we will be talking about leading organizational change.

Reasons for change

Leading change is a challenge. It requires courage, wisdom, compassion, and humility. It can turn out to be a very complex process. It can give rise to serious disagreements. People may not agree on the facts, the values to be applied, or the goals to be reached. There are usually arguments between the head and the heart. A change that makes sense intellectually may be hard to accept emotionally. And it is difficult to accurately predict the end results of a change process. There always seem to be unintended consequences.

There are many reasons to lead organizational change. An organization may be failing and must change in order to survive. Or an organization may be growing, and the growth requires new ways of doing things. Or an organization may change in order to better serve its employees and customers. Most organizations must change on a regular basis due to changes in the world around them, and the fact that employees and leaders of the organization come and go.

Externally, the world continues to change in terms of socio-economic conditions, political trends and governmental regulations, technology, and the natural environment. Organizations are also affected by competition from other organizations, and changes in the market for their programs or products. There are a lot external factors pushing organizations to change.

There are internal factors as well. Organizations change as people come and go. Turnover is a fact of life. It is estimated that the average employee turnover rate in the United States was 18.5% in 2017. Turnover among CEOs has also been high. It is

estimated that in 2015, 17% of the globe's largest public companies saw their CEO's leave their firms.

As a result of turnover, employees may experience changes in work assignments and their relationships with other team members. They may find themselves in a different office space, a different work location, or a different work environment. They may need to learn new skills, or exercise more initiative or leadership. These can be big changes in a person's life at work, with impacts on his or her family as well.

The stress and pain

People typically resist change. They find it hard to give up doing things the way they are used to doing them, even if they can see that new ways will be better. In addition, the change process often requires more hours of work in order to keep the organization running while new systems are learned and introduced.

People also fear that however good the change may be for the organization and those it serves, the change may not be good for their own jobs and careers. In short, change can be stressful and painful for individual employees.

That is why you should never launch a change process unless the changes are truly necessary. The only moral justification for putting people through the stress and pain is that the changes will result in an organization that can better serve its mission, its employees, its customers, and society at large.

When launching a change process, it is important to reach an understanding of the higher purpose that is served by the change. Is this what God is calling us to do? Will the change help us to fulfill our mission and vision? Is it true to our values? Will the change help us to serve our customers better? Will the change help us to serve each other better? Will the change lay a strong foundation for us to continue serving others in the future? These questions need to be discussed and answered within the organization.

Herold and Fedor, in their book, *Change the Way You Lead Change,*[66] pointed out that leaders need to understand how change will impact others. Understanding the impact on others helps decide what to change, how fast, and with what resources.

There are fundamental questions to ask when leading change. What do we think needs changing? Why? Who will lead the change? Who is expected to follow? What is the internal context like? What is the external context like? Servant-leaders ask these questions and seek out the answers.

Different experiences with change

When seeking to understand the impacts on others, servant leaders keep in mind that some people are used to change, while others are not. For example, I am used to change. Change has been a big part of my personal and professional life.

I grew up in six states—New York, Nebraska, California, Virginia, Rhode Island, and Hawaii. I went to 9 schools in 12 years, and then attended six different universities. I have lived in three foreign countries for a total of seven years—two years in England, two years in Japan, and three years in Singapore. During the first seven years of our marriage, my wife and I lived in six different places. During the past 40 years, I have worked for nine organizations, and they have been in the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors.

That just happens to be my own background. Other people have very different backgrounds. We vary in our experience and tolerance for change.

However, even if we have the *same* backgrounds, a specific change will affect each of us differently. A change that is a big change for one person may not be a big change for another person.

For example, if an organization moves its workplace to the other side of town, it will become easier for some people to get to work, and harder for others. If the organization embarks on a special project requiring overtime, that will be hard for employees who need to leave work on time to get their children to soccer practice, but not much of a problem for people without those kinds of family responsibilities. Discontinuing a product line will affect those who produce and sell that product, while having little or no impact on anyone else.

And so it goes. We are different in our experience with change, and we are impacted differently by specific changes. Servant leaders keep these differences in mind.

Doubts during the change process

I have learned that, in general, people are willing to change when they are consulted, they understand the need for the change, they understand what the change is about, they have the time and resources to make the change, and they are kept informed during the change process.

However, I have been in situations in which people agreed intellectually to support the change process, but when we began to implement it, they complained, or even attacked. The attacks were often bitter.

Sometimes we know intellectually what must be done, but that does not mean that

the change will feel good when it happens. Intellectual agreement can be followed by emotional pain. This is when the leader's love for colleagues is needed most. People are grieving. They are losing something. Some of the old ways are dying. So they need compassion. They need the leader's patience and support as they adjust.

Even if they are not grieving, people often have doubts. A change process can take time—months or years. It is common for doubts to emerge during the change process. Is this change really necessary? What was it that we were trying to accomplish? The benefits of the change have not yet been achieved, so people only feel the costs. They only feel the extra work, the stress, the confusion, and the pain. Compared with those costs, the past looks pretty good. What were we thinking?

This situation goes back at least as far as Moses. He led the Israelites from a life of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land. One would think that the Israelites would have been overjoyed, not only to be free, but to be on a journey that would take them to a new home, a land of milk and honey.

But that isn't what the Bible tells us. It was a long journey, and the Israelites had their doubts from the very beginning. They kept mentioning how much better life had been back in Egypt. Why did Moses lead them out into the desert to die? Back in Egypt, they had food in their pots. The Israelites complained, resisted, and even went astray. Moses was a great prophet, leading his people on a journey of great historical and religious significance. But even for him, even with the help of God's miracles, leading change was not easy.

It wasn't easy for Jesus, either. He taught a new way of loving and living, a new way of relating to God, a new way of being God's people, a new way of understanding the kingdom of God. The crowd didn't understand—they wanted him to be an earthly king. The disciples had trouble understanding, too. They told him not to go to Jerusalem, because they didn't want him to die; they didn't like God's plan. In the Garden of Gethsemane, they couldn't stay awake and pray with him. After Jesus was arrested, the disciples scattered, and Peter denied him three times. But that wasn't the end of the story. In fact, we know that the story will never end. Jesus changed the world, and Christ reigns.

If it was hard for Moses and Jesus, we shouldn't be surprised that it can be hard for us. We need to have empathy for our colleagues who are going through the change process. We need to acknowledge their doubts. We need to stay with them, listening and encouraging them. We need to remind them of the benefits that will eventually be achieved if we stay on course and we stay together.

Servant leaders are good at leading change

There are a number of reasons that servant leaders are good at leading change. One

is that they do not use organizational change as an excuse for building their own power and position. Servant-leaders do not make changes based on personalities, factional politics, and competition between rivals. Instead, servant-leaders focus on meeting the needs of the organization and those it serves.

Another reason that servant leaders are good at leading change is that they are team leaders. They include and support other team members. They are open to the ideas, talents, and leadership of others. They help everyone to make their highest and best contributions to the organization.

Another reason servant leaders are good at leading change is that servant leaders build their organizational communities. This helps members of the organization to stay together during the change process. A healthy change process can in fact *deepen* the commitment of employees to each other, their organization, and their customers.

Most important, servant leaders are good at leading change because they are good shepherds. They care about the emotional and spiritual health of their colleagues. They pace the rate of change so that the community can manage it. They consult with their colleagues on a regular basis, making adjustments to the change process as needed.

The consultative approach

This consultative approach balances the need to make a decision in a timely manner with the need to implement the decision in an effective way. The leader seeks broad-based input, so that the decision will be appropriate and people will be willing and able to implement it.

In the 1970s I worked part-time in a securities company in Tokyo. I became interested in how Japanese and American businessmen negotiated and made deals. I learned that the Japanese were slow to make a decision, because they involved their teams. Once a decision was made, however, they were quick to implement it, because everyone on the team understood what needed to be done and was ready to do it.

The Americans, on the other hand, were quick to make a decision, because they didn't involve their teams. However, they were slow to implement the decision, because the team back home did not understand the decision and was not ready. Sometimes the team members dragged their feet or sabotaged the deal because they resented being left out of the negotiations.

That's why servant leaders don't just issue orders. They don't just send a memo. People may not understand the memo, or may not have the time, ability, or resources to do what is requested. Even worse, people may not want to do what is requested, and may find ways to resist.

Instead of issuing orders, servant leaders use a consultative approach to decision-making. Consultative decision-making sits between autocratic and democratic decision-making. *Autocratic* decision-making can easily produce bad decisions when the autocrat does not listen, and does not have enough information. Since others are left out, his or her ideas may be resisted or resented.

Democratic decision-making is necessary in our politics, but within an organization, it can easily lead to bad decisions. That's because the majority only has to get 51 percent of the votes. That means they can ignore the ideas and concerns of the other 49 percent—ideas and concerns which could be crucial during implementation.

The goal in *consultative* decision-making is to get input from a variety of sources in order to collect all the ideas, facts, and concerns, pro and con, relating to the decision. By gathering a variety of views, a decision can be made that has the best chance of being implemented because it maximizes the positive and minimizes the negative impacts.

Consulting even in emergencies

Even people who assume that consultation is good, will say that there are limits. For example, in an emergency, the leader needs to act quickly and decisively without stopping to get input from others. There just isn't time.

I understand that in an emergency, other people may not be *available* to provide input. But if people are available, asking for input is still important. Let me tell you why I say this.

In his book, *Leading Change*, James O'Toole reported on a series of cockpit simulations that were run by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration back in the 1970s. They put three-person crews into flight simulators and measured their effectiveness in responding to computer-generated crises. Those crises could be caused by hypothetical air traffic problems, equipment failures, bad weather, and so on.

They found that some pilots would react by barking out orders, while others reacted by asking the other two members of the flight crew for input. In each case, there was no question that the pilot was in charge and would make the decision. The difference was that some consulted with the crew, and some did not. What the researchers concluded was that the pilots who asked for input made better decisions.

The researchers reviewed real-life data and established that, in almost all crisis situations, crews have at least thirty seconds in which to act. Asking two questions and listening to the responses takes only five to fifteen seconds, giving the pilot fifteen seconds or more to make a better decision—a decision that could save lives. Even in a crisis, even when there is almost no time to decide, consulting with others can still be the best approach.[67]

The Delphi story

One of the most dramatic stories I have ever heard regarding a change process is the story of the Delphi brake assembly operations in Dayton, Ohio. In 2006, the 1,600 employees were told that their operations would close in 2008. The business was sold to another company, which needed two years to build their plant and train their people before taking over the business.

Employees were angry and frightened. Some had worked for GM and Delphi for decades. Hundreds left immediately, so their replacements had to be hired and trained.

The challenge was to keep producing high quality brakes until the last day, two years later. That meant building one million assemblies of brake components per month. The brakes had to be high quality—they were essential to the safety of every car. This high quality had to be achieved by employees who knew that they all would be losing their jobs.

Tom Green was the plant manager and Mary Miller was the human resources officer for the brake assembly operations. It was my pleasure to meet them and learn about their inspiring story first-hand.

Tom and Mary were told by corporate headquarters that there was no ready-made plan to help them deal with the closure of their operations. They were on their own. This turned out to be a blessing. It meant that in facing the crisis, they could do what they had always wanted to do—they could apply servant leadership principles.

They applied four principles. The first principle was: *Listen, don't talk.* The second principle was: *Ask employees, "what do you need?"* The third principle was: *Set aside time every day for foresight and planning.* And the fourth principle was: *Ask, "do those served grow as persons?"*

Rather than focusing on the fact that everyone would be losing their jobs, they sat down with employees and asked them how they could make the best use of the final two years to prepare them for their *next* job. Did they want additional training? Did they want to finish a college degree? Did they want job rotation, to broaden their resume?

They came up with an individual development plan for each employee. They checked back every few months to make sure that the individual development plans were implemented. While they did many things to manage the crisis, this was a key to the plant's success during the last two years.

And the success was dramatic. During its last two years, the brake assembly plant became one of the safest manufacturing plants in the United States. Defects were single

digit—9 or less per million. On-time delivery was 99.5%. And they saved $160 million in operating costs, which was the most profitable they had been in decades. On their last day of work, they were the best they had ever been. Servant leadership was the reason.

Changing oneself and growing others

One of the key practices of servant leaders is to grow people. McFarland and Goldsworthy in their book, *Choosing Change,* said that developing employees is a key factor in successful change efforts. They pointed out that leaders have to be willing to start the change process by changing their *own* behavior. If the leader is not willing to change, how can the leader expect everyone else in the organization to change?[68]

A good example is Capt. Michael Abrashoff, who took command of the *USS Benfold* in 1997. At the time, retention was poor in the US Navy. Morale seemed to be especially bad on the *USS Benfold*, whose crew members cheered when the previous captain left the ship. It was close to being the worst-performing ship in the Navy. A year after Capt. Abrashoff assumed command, it was rated the best in the fleet—with the same crew.

At first, Capt. Abrashoff didn't know how to turn the situation around. Yes, he knew all about command and control, but that had obviously failed his predecessor. What should he do? After watching and listening, he concluded that retaining people sometimes requires changing their lives. But first, he had to change himself. He had to become an entirely different type of leader.

Instead of barking orders and relying on his power as commander, Capt. Abrashoff met with each sailor, one-on-one, to get to know them and ask for their advice. "It's your ship," he would say. "How would you make it better?" He delegated more and more responsibility for running the ship. He created a shipboard learning center where sailors could take college-level distance learning courses.

Capt. Abrashoff said that the only way to achieve his goals—combat readiness, retention, and trust—was to help his people grow. It worked. The *Benfold* set all-time records for performance and retention, and the waiting list of officers and enlisted personnel who wanted to transfer to the *Benfold* was pages long. It was a long wait because very few aboard the *Benfold* wanted to leave. Capt. Abrashoff started the change process by changing himself, and then he helped others to change. The results were extraordinary.[69]

Leading change at a failing institution

Earlier, I mentioned three different situations that can require a change process. An organization may be failing and must change in order to survive. Or an organization may be growing, and the growth requires new ways of doing things. Or an organization may

seek to change in order to better serve their employees and customers. Let me comment a little on each of these situations, because leading change in each of these situations can be different.

First, the situation in which an organization is failing and must change in order to survive. A failing institution is usually failing for a number of reasons. One is simply denial, a refusal to recognize reality. Another is that leaders do not have the courage to make hard decisions, like cutting positions and programs, and reallocating resources to areas that are promising for the future. Another reason is that nostalgia for the past is so strong that a significant number of people in the organization would rather that the institution close its doors instead of changing so that it can survive. It may also be that the institution has lost sight of its mission.

Many years ago, I worked with a friend and colleague, Dr. Edward Kormondy, to do a research project.[70] We studied college and university presidents who led turnarounds at their universities, saving their campuses from closing their doors. What problems did they face, and how did they handle them?

We gathered survey data from thirty-six presidents. We learned that thirty-one of the thirty-six presidents said that the major issue was that their institutions simply didn't know where they were going. They had lost focus and direction.

These presidents did a number of things to bring about change, but they gave priority to strategic planning and restructuring the senior management team. Once they figured out where they were going, they needed new leaders who were committed to going there. One of the sad aspects of leading change at a failing institution is that the people who got the institution *into* trouble will probably not be the people who can get it *out* of trouble. New leadership is needed.

A servant leader who is invited to be one of those new leaders at a failing institution may find that the problems and solutions are fairly obvious. The challenge is to help people to understand the situation and develop a realistic plan of action. Implementation of the action plan will take courage, persistence, a thick skin, a lot of compassion, a relentless focus on the organization's mission, and a renewed commitment to whomever the organization serves.

Leading change at a growing organization

The challenge is different at an organization that is growing. The challenge may be that the organization has grown beyond its original organizational structure. Often the challenge is that the organization has grown beyond the leadership capacity of its founder or early leaders.

Organizations are often the dream of an individual, the founder, who risks time and personal resources to get the organization started. A small group of others join the founder, equally committed to the organization's mission. The team is small, there is a lot of interaction between team members, and there isn't much formal structure. The business is started in the founder's garage or living room, and the team lives on passion, prayer, hope, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Those days are indeed exciting days, later known as "the good old days."

Then success comes. More people need to be hired, the garage or living room isn't big enough so offices are rented, and people don't see each other as often. Communication systems have to be set up, meetings have to be scheduled, rules have to be adopted, and there is a first hint of office politics. Still, the founder and the original team are leading the effort and are involved in all of the decisions.

But the growth continues until the founder and the original team can no longer make all the decisions. It is at this point that some entrepreneurs sell the business and go back to their garage or living room and start another one. If the founder is a servant leader, he or she will continue leading by sharing decision-making and supporting the growth of other leaders. The organization will focus on its mission, rather than its founder.

But founders who are not servant leaders will want to stay in control. They are unable to delegate decisions, and as a result, they limit the growth of the organization. This is known as "founder's syndrome." If the organization is to grow, the founder has to resign or be forced out of his or her leadership role. That is a sad situation that often leaves deep scars.

Leading change at a successful organization

The third situation is an organization that is not failing or growing, but an organization that wants to do better. Since the organization appears to be doing all right, the need for change may be harder for people to accept.

John P. Kotter has written a number of books on change. He says that the first step in leading change is establishing a sense of urgency. He tells the story of a company that had decentralized its purchasing process, so that individual factories had their own suppliers and did their own purchasing. The company's purchasing managers thought they could centralize purchasing and save $1 billion over five years. However, centralizing purchasing would be a big change, and there was no sense of urgency to support it.

To demonstrate the problem, a purchasing manager asked a summer student to do a small study on how many different kinds of gloves were used at its many factories. Her study revealed that their factories were purchasing 424 different kinds of gloves, and they were paying different prices for the same gloves.

The purchasing team gathered samples of all 424 kinds of gloves and put them on the boardroom table. Then all the division presidents were invited to visit the boardroom. They were shocked. They could see the huge pile, and they could see gloves that looked the same, but had prices ranging from $3 to $10. They got the point. The pile of gloves was used throughout the company to explain how money could be saved by centralizing purchasing.[71]

Joe Patrnchak led a successful effort to introduce servant leadership principles and lead a change process at the Cleveland Clinic. Joe's background was in high tech, but he felt called by God to accept the position of Chief Human Resources Officer at Cleveland Clinic in 2007.

The Cleveland Clinic is one of the most respected healthcare systems in the world. It has 40,000 employees and 3.5 million patient visits per year from citizens of over 100 countries. The *U.S. News & World Report* typically ranks it in the top four of all U.S. healthcare systems. But back in 2007, not all was well at the Cleveland Clinic.

The change process that Joe led is described in his book, *The Engaged Enterprise.*[72] Joe knew that people would not support change unless they were dissatisfied—unless they had a sense of urgency. So he commissioned a survey on employee engagement that showed that engagement was poor. Then a survey of patient satisfaction showed that while clinical results were superior, the overall patient experience was only average. These surveys established dissatisfaction among the leaders, who then supported a major effort to improve employee engagement. Joe suggested that they focus on improving the Cleveland Clinic as a great place to work.

The leaders adopted the statement, "we are all caregivers," to convey the idea that everyone at the clinic affected patients in some way, even if they were not doctors or nurses. For example, the patient experience was affected by the people who maintain the facilities, and work in the kitchen, and check in the patients, and walk people to their cars when they are ready to go home.

A program was launched to bring together caregivers from different functions and levels of the organization for three-hour discussions of the mission and values of the clinic. Then Joe introduced servant leadership as the leadership model. Within two years, more than 3,000 leaders received servant leadership training.

The clinic decided to "care for the caregivers" by instituting a series of employee benefits. My favorite one is the wellness program that gives staff members free access to Weight Watchers and Curves. Over 12,500 employees participated in the wellness program, and they lost a total of 75,000 pounds. As a result, the clinic saved $78 million in healthcare costs.

The change process took deep commitment, because there was resistance at each

stage regarding each new program. It also took a long-term commitment, because it was two years before improvements in employee engagement showed up in the surveys. However, at the end of five years, the ratio of engaged to actively disengaged employees went from a dismal 2.5 to 1 to a world class 10.5 to 1. Patient satisfaction improved just as dramatically. The change process was a remarkable success. Servant leadership was a big reason.

Summary

In summary, there are many reasons for leading change. An organization may be failing, or growing, or seeking to improve its service. External forces and internal turnover can cause change. People vary in their experience of change, and specific changes impact individuals differently. Even when the need for change is clear, people can experience stress, pain, and doubt. Change can be successful if the leader is a servant leader—a good shepherd who consults with others and cares about the emotional and spiritual health of all team members during the change process.

Building Cathedrals

Module Seven Lecture

Welcome to the seventh module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." So far in the series we have provided a Biblical framework for a life of Christian leadership, and discussed faith, love, and service as the foundation for that life. We examined the power model of leadership, which Jesus rejected, and the service model, which embodies the teachings of Jesus. We reviewed the characteristics of servant leadership, and the key practices of servant leaders. We explored organizational communities and institutional operating principles, and then discussed the challenges of leading organizational change. In this lecture, we will be talking about assumptions about human behavior and motivation.

Theory X and Theory Y

Our ability to lead and serve others is affected by our assumptions about who people are and what motivates them. Often, we accept the assumptions that are common in the secular culture, without really thinking about them.

One person who thought about them was Douglas McGregor, a professor of management at MIT. In his classic book, *The Human Side of Enterprise,*[73] he said that how we lead or manage people depends on our assumptions about human nature and human behavior. He described two sets of assumptions he called Theory X and Theory Y.

Theory X assumes that most people dislike work and will avoid it if they can. Because they don't like work, they must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to get them to work. Furthermore, most people want to avoid responsibility. They have little ambition. They just want to be secure.

By contrast, Theory Y assumes that work is as natural as play or rest. The threat of punishment is *not* the only way to get people to work. In fact, people will exercise self-direction and self-control in working toward organizational objectives when they are committed to them. They will be committed to them when there are rewards that make sense to them. Those rewards can be psychological, such as ego satisfaction or self-actualization.

Theory Y assumes that most people learn not only to accept responsibility, but to seek it. And a lot of people have the capacity to exercise imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in solving organizational problems. In short, people are willing to work, and they can make significant contributions to their organizations.

McGregor said that unfortunately, the intellectual potential of the average human being is only partially utilized at work. The reason is that Theory X managers don't *let* employees contribute their best work. Then they blame employees for *not* contributing their best. They blame employees for poor performance, saying that employees are lazy, indifferent, unwilling to take responsibility, uncreative, and uncooperative. It's the employees' fault.

Theory Y says that if employees are not contributing their best work, it is *management's* fault, not the employees' fault. Employees have a lot of potential. Managers need to help them realize that potential. That's their job. That's what managers are supposed to do.

And that's what servant leaders do. They help people to develop and utilize their full potential. You might call it "Theory Y Plus." For Christian leaders, this is natural. We know that we are made in the image of God, and God has given each of us certain talents or gifts that we can use to love and serve others. Helping people to develop and use their gifts is a sacred and noble task. It is a high priority for the Christian servant leader.

Extrinsic motivation

In addition to Theory X and Theory Y, leaders have assumptions about how to motivate people. The two basic motivations are described as extrinsic and intrinsic. Let's explore these two ideas.

Extrinsic motivation is about what you *have* to do, not what you *want* to do. People are extrinsically motivated when they don't like a job, but they do it because they need the money or the reward, or they want to avoid punishment. This is the traditional "carrot and the stick" approach used on donkeys: dangle the carrot in front of the donkey as an incentive to get him to move forward, and use the stick to whap him in the back as punishment if he doesn't. Basically, extrinsic motivation is a simple proposition: If you do *this*, you will get *that*. And *that* has nothing to do with the work itself.

Extrinsic motivation is deeply ingrained in our secular culture and our organizations. It affects how we raise children, teach students, and manage employees. We constantly search for "incentives" to offer people in order to get them to do things. We tell a child that if he will read that book, we will give him ice cream. We tell a student that if she gets good grades, we will throw a party for her. We tell an employee that if he reaches the sales goal, we will give him a bonus.

Many of today's practices are based on the research done fifty years ago by B.F. Skinner, a radical behaviorist. The rats and pigeons Skinner used in his experiments were conditioned by rewards and punishments. Skinner concluded that you can control people the same way. Want to get something done? Offer an incentive or issue a threat, and people will perform.

However, people are not rats or pigeons. Empirical research over the past thirty years has demonstrated the limitations of extrinsic rewards and punishments. For his book, *Punished by Rewards,*[74] Alfie Kohn reviewed hundreds of studies and concluded that for many reasons, rewards do *not* result in people doing a better job. In fact, they can make things worse.

Kohn found that extrinsic rewards devalue the work, because the message is clear—the work is not as exciting as the reward. When we say, "if you read this book, I will give you ice cream," we are saying that reading the book is not as exciting as eating ice cream.

Extrinsic rewards can also kill intrinsic motivation. Something that was once done because it was fun or meaningful becomes "work" when it is rewarded. After that, people will only do it if they continue to be rewarded in some way.

Alfie Kohn tells a joke about an elderly man who knew that extrinsic rewards can kill intrinsic motivation. The old man sat on his front porch, and each afternoon, he endured the insults of a crowd of ten-year-olds who passed his house on their way home from school. They said he was stupid, and ugly, and bald.

The man didn't enjoy that, so he came up with a plan. He met the children on his lawn and announced that anyone who came back the next day and insulted him again would receive a dollar. The kids were delighted. They had been insulting him for free, but now they would be paid. Terrific! They were excited. So they came back the next day, and enthusiastically hollered insults for all they were worth. True to his word, the old man gave them each a dollar. "Come back tomorrow and insult me again, and I will give you 25 cents," the old man said. The kids weren't as thrilled with 25 cents, but that was still pretty good. So they came back the next day, and hurled terrible insults at the old man. He met them with a roll of quarters and paid each of them. "From now on," he announced, "I can only give you a penny for doing this." The kids looked at each other in disbelief. "Only a penny? Forget it!" They went away and never came back. The extrinsic reward had killed the intrinsic motivation.

My wife, Dr. Elizabeth Keith, experienced this effect when she was the advisor of the Japanese Club at Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore. The 400-member club used to do service projects during the year. It was something they enjoyed doing. Then the campus administration decided to encourage service projects by giving clubs points for each service project they conducted. At the end of the year, the club with the most points would get some kind of prize like a pizza party. Unfortunately, the result was that the Japanese Club did fewer service projects. If they proposed a project, and the administration didn't offer a lot of points for it, they wouldn't do it at all. They used to do service projects for fun, but now they would only do them if they got a lot of points. The extrinsic reward had killed the intrinsic motivation.

Kohn also found that rewards can hide problems. When things aren't going well,

managers are tempted to offer rewards or make threats, instead of sitting down with employees to learn why performance is poor and how it can be improved. In a sense, managers aren't managing—they are just issuing rewards or punishments. They still don't know the *reasons* for poor performance.

Empirical research indicates that when employees set goals, they set goals at levels lower than they could achieve, in order to make sure they get the reward. Furthermore, extrinsic rewards undermine performance, because people just want the reward, and will only do the minimum necessary to get it. Even worse, they may cheat or cut corners in order to get the reward.

A *Harvard Business Review* article a few years ago gave Sears, Roebuck as an example. Sears gave automotive mechanics a sales goal of $147 per hour. I imagine that those who did not reach the goal were putting their jobs at risk. In any case, rather than working faster, the mechanics met the goal by overcharging for their services and "repairing" things that weren't broken.[75]

As another example, thousands of employees of Wells Fargo bank created an estimated 3.5 million accounts over 15 years without the consent of their customers. The customers were charged for accounts they didn't ask for and didn't even know they had. Bank employees created the fraudulent accounts to meet the bank's sales quotas. Again, I imagine that there were extrinsic rewards for those who met the sales quotas, and implied threats for those who did not.

The massive fraud was finally uncovered. So far, the bank has spent more than $600 million settling lawsuits arising from the fraud. Recently, the bank has been running TV ads about how they lost everyone's trust with the fraudulent accounts, and now they are re-establishing the company to re-establish the trust of their customers. For Sears and Wells Fargo, the extrinsic motivators backfired.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is very different from extrinsic motivation. It is about what you *want* to do, not what you *have* to do. People are intrinsically motivated when they do something because it is fun, interesting, fulfilling, or meaningful. The work itself is the reward. We don't say, if you do *this*, you will get *that*. We say if you do *this*, you'll like it. It will be fun, interesting, fulfilling, or meaningful.

In his book, *Intrinsic Motivation at Work*,[76] Dr. Kenneth W. Thomas reported on the results of sixteen years of research on intrinsic motivation. What he found was that intrinsic rewards relate to higher levels of job satisfaction, performance, innovativeness, commitment to the organization, and reduced stress.

Thomas and his colleagues identified four intrinsic rewards at work: a sense of meaningfulness, a sense of choice, a sense of competence, and a sense of progress. Servant-leaders attend to all these intrinsic rewards. They help their colleagues to find meaning in serving God by serving others. They unleash their colleagues, encouraging them to make more choices. They build competence through training and development. And they coach and mentor their colleagues, providing feedback and supporting their progress.

Herzberg on motivation

One of the most-read articles in the history of the *Harvard Business Review* is an article by Frederick Herzberg entitled "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?"[77] Herzberg argued that extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are both important, but for different reasons.

Herzberg believed that there are factors that can lead to extreme *dissatisfaction* on the job. Those factors include company policy and administration, relationship with the supervisor, relationships with other employees, work conditions, salary, status, and security. He called these "hygiene" factors or extrinsic factors.

By contrast, the factors that lead to extreme *satisfaction* at work are intrinsic motivators. Those factors include achievement, recognition, responsibility, the work itself, advancement, and growth.

Herzberg argued that the factors that produce job dissatisfaction and the factors that produce job satisfaction are not the opposite of each other. They represent different human needs. Employers need to get the extrinsic factors right so that employees will not be *dissatisfied*. However, getting the extrinsic factors right is not enough to make employees happy and motivated.

What makes people happy and motivated is the set of intrinsic factors that relate to the content of the job—achievement, recognition, responsibility, the work itself, advancement, and growth. Herzberg argued that if we focused on enriching jobs so that people were more motivated intrinsically, there would be a huge dividend in terms of human satisfaction and increased productivity.

In short, both kinds of motivators are important. But if you want to help your colleagues to reach their highest levels of performance, you must focus on intrinsic motivators.

Finding meaning is a life or death issue

In his research, Thomas identified meaning as an intrinsic motivator. He said that a sense of *meaningfulness* arises when you have the opportunity to pursue a worthy task, that you are on a valuable mission, that your purpose matters in the larger scheme of things. People of faith are blessed in this regard. We are given the opportunity to do God's work, for God's glory. I can't imagine a more worthy task, or a more valuable mission that matters more in the larger scheme of things.

There are many benefits to finding meaning. Research has shown that having purpose and meaning in life increases overall well-being and life satisfaction, and improves mental and physical health, as well as resiliency. Having meaning in life also enhances self-esteem, decreases the chances of depression, and is a key to being deeply happy. It can also be the key to life or death.

Viktor Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist in Vienna when World War II broke out. He was sent to Nazi labor camps, which were terrible places. People were literally worked to death. Frankl observed that those who survived the labor camps were those who had a reason to live—those who still had meaning in their lives. He concluded that the primary motivational force for human beings is not the drive for power or sex, but the drive for meaning.

After the war, Frankl established what he called "logotherapy" to focus his clients on the meaning in their lives. He wrote a book, *Man's Search for Meaning*,[78] about his experiences in the Nazi labor camps. It is not a happy book, but it is an important book that has had a significant impact in the United States and around the world.

A study was done a few years ago by a group of scholars named Boyle, Barnes, Buchman and Bennet.[79] The study was on meaning and the length of life of older people. The people were interviewed and categorized into two groups. One group had low meaning in their lives, and the other group had high meaning in their lives. The study controlled for depression, disability, neurotic personality traits, chronic medical conditions, and income.

The scholars followed the two groups for five years. They discovered that those in the low meaning group had a higher risk of mortality. A much larger percentage of them died—in fact, twice as many as the high meaning group. The study suggests that meaning *is* a life or death issue, just as Frankl found in the Nazi labor camps.

Sources of meaning

Unfortunately, millions of Americans do not have meaning or purpose in their lives. According to the Center for Disease Control, about 4 out of 10 Americans have not

discovered a satisfying life purpose. And nearly a quarter of Americans do not have a strong sense of what makes their lives meaningful.

This is sad, because it is so easy to find meaning. There is meaning all around us, at home and at work.

I can think of four sources of meaning that come from the teachings of Jesus, and are available to everyone. They are: love people, help people, live ethically, and don't be too attached to material things.

I cannot prove it, but I think there is a causal connection between these four sources of meaning. If you love people, you usually want to help them, and you want to treat them right. And if you are loving and helping people and treating them right, you are probably more focused on people, and not as focused on material things. Instead, you can focus on the life of the spirit.

Most of us will spend a big part of our lives at work. Let me suggest nine sources of meaning at work that are always available to you, regardless of what is happening in your organization or the world around you. The reason is that these sources of meaning depend on your faith, your values, and your attitude—all things that you control.

1. Living your faith

First, we need to remember that we were created to be productive. In Genesis 2 we read that the Lord put man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. We are designed to work, and our work can be an act of worship. As Paul wrote to the Colossians, whatever we do, we should work at it with all our hearts, as though we are working for the Lord, not for human masters. It is the Lord Jesus Christ we are serving. That should give our work a lot of meaning.

2. The impact of your organization

The next place to look for meaning is in the impact of your organization. Think about all the children and teens and adults and seniors and families and communities that your organization touches. Jesus called us to serve others. That's what you and your colleagues are doing through your programs or products. You are making a difference in the lives of others. That should be a big source of meaning for you.

3. Your job or role within your organization

Another source of meaning is your particular job or role *within* your organization. Your daily work is not just about your tasks, but about the meaning you find in those tasks. Finding that meaning is up to you.

There is a well-known story that makes this point. It is a story about a monk who was traveling through Europe in the middle ages. He came out onto a small plain. In the distance, he could see the foundation of a cathedral that was being built. As he walked, he came to the stone quarry where two men were chipping the stone that would be used in the cathedral. The monk walked up to the first man and said: "Good morning, kind sir. Tell me—what are you doing?" "I am chipping stone," the first man said. The monk thanked him and walked a little farther until he came to a second man. He said to the second man, "Good morning, kind sir. Tell me—what are you doing?" The second man stopped, put down his chisel, and looked up with a big smile. "I am building a cathedral," he said.

Now obviously, the two men were doing the same thing, but they didn't look at it the same way. The first man didn't find a lot of meaning in his work. The second man found a lot. The point is simple: there is a lot of meaning available to us every day, if only we look up, and see the cathedral.

A few years ago I saw a TV ad for the United States Air Force which had a similar message for me. The ad began with a mother and her children playing in their living room. Then the scene froze, with the mother and children facing the camera, smiling. The camera drew back, and you could see that it was a photograph attached to a wall. The camera drew back farther, and you see that the wall was the side panel in the cockpit of an airplane. As the camera continued to draw back, you saw the pilot, the husband and father, flying at night, with the photo of his family there next to him. And you knew that he wasn't just flying a plane. He was protecting the family and the country that he loved. He was on a mission.

If you think you just work at your organization, you're just chipping stone. If you think you're just doing administration or project management or human resources or information technology or accounting, you're just flying a plane. You're missing the bigger meaning. What you are really doing is meeting important human needs and improving the quality of lives. That's your cathedral. That's your mission. And it should be a tremendous source of meaning for you—every day.

4. Focus on your contribution

Next, focus on your contribution. Peter Drucker, a founding father of the modern field of management studies, said that the key question that distinguishes an executive is the question: "What can I contribute?"[80] Making a contribution is about making a difference. Day after day, year after year, keep asking yourself: What can I contribute?

Can you suggest a new product or program or service? How about a way of cutting costs while maintaining quality? Can you develop new relationships with customers that will help your organization to serve them better? Can you spot a potential problem far

enough in advance that you can solve it before it becomes a really big problem, or can you find a solution to a problem that has been around for a long time?

Think outside your particular job or department to the needs of the entire organization and your customers, and look for a contribution you can make. When you focus on contribution, you are likely to make a difference, and that difference will be a wonderful source of meaning.

I want to add a note, here. Sometimes, the contribution you make doesn't resolve an issue, but is still a step in the right direction and is worth taking. I think about the story of the starfish and the boy. Thousands of starfish had washed ashore on a beach, where they began to dry and die in the sun. A boy noticed them, and he started picking them up and tossing them back into the water. A passerby watched from a distance, and then approached the boy and said, "Why bother? There are too many of them to make a difference." "I made a difference in the life of *that* one," the boy said, as he put another starfish back in the water. Sometimes you can't solve the entire problem, but you can still make a meaningful contribution.

5. Focus on helping your colleagues

Next, focus on helping your colleagues within your organization. Whether the organization chart shows them as your subordinates, peers, or superiors, there are things that your colleagues need. If you pay attention, you will find appropriate ways to help them.

One of the best things you can do is to be a mentor. You don't have to wait long. Even if you have been on the job only a few months, you already know things that new employees don't know on their first day. Help new members of the team understand the organization's mission and values. Helping your colleagues will give you a lot of personal meaning.

6. Focus on pitching in to get the work done

Next, focus on pitching in to get the work done. We are social beings, so it is hard to ignore the gossip and office politics. But the simple fact is that your work is not about whether you're on the inside track, or the outside track, or nowhere near the track. It's not about those knowing glances across the conference room table, or the whispering at the water cooler about you-know-what. Your work is about fulfilling the mission of your organization and meeting the needs of your customers. That's where the meaning is. The meaning isn't in the rumor mill, the meaning is in the work.

7. Always do what's right

Next, always do what's right. Things can change quickly in the world of work. Sometimes, it is a change in leadership; other times, the rapid rise of a competitor; still other times, a new government regulation. When the world of work changes, you will need to adapt and respond.

But a change in the world of work shouldn't change who you are as a person, and it shouldn't change what you know is right and good and true. You need to have core values, and you need to live those values. If you do, you won't get lost. Even when the world around you becomes foggy and unpredictable, you'll know who you are and how you want to live. That should give you a lot of personal meaning.

8. Always do your best

Next, always do your best. That should be what defines you. One of the questions I like to ask people is this: *If you aren't giving the world your best, what world are you saving it for?* This is the work you are given, these are the people you can help with your programs and products. Why would you want to hold back? Every day, each of us can give our very best, and enjoy the personal meaning that comes to us when we do.

9. Be ambitious—for your organization

Finally, be ambitious, but be ambitious for your organization, not yourself. Think beyond yourself, to the greater good of your organization. What are your ambitions for your organization next year? In five years? In ten years? What can you do to help your organization fulfill those ambitions? What legacy do you want to leave? Think big. Being part of an ambitious future will be very meaningful.

So those are nine sources of meaning at work that are always available to you because they are about your faith, your values, and your attitude.

Because meaning is so important, servant-leaders are meaning-makers. They help their colleagues to understand the meaning of the organization's work. They help their colleagues to understand the meaning of their specific roles at work. They redesign work where possible to make it *more* meaningful.

When appropriate, the Christian servant leader helps people to connect their work with the message of the Gospels and the example of Jesus. The servant leader helps colleagues to explore their work as lay ministries that build on the gifts that God has given them. The work becomes meaningful when it glorifies God.

Finding meaning at Popeyes

Cheryl Bachelder is a Christian servant leader who has helped others to find meaning in their work. Cheryl is CEO of Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen. In her book, *Dare to Serve*,[81] she described the ways in which she applied servant leadership principles to turn around the restaurant chain.

When Cheryl started at Popeye's, the company had been declining for a long time. Six years after she started, average restaurant sales had climbed by 25 percent, market share had grown from 14 to 21 percent, profitability at Popeyes restaurants was up by 40 percent in real dollars, and the stock price was up 450 percent. Cheryl dared to serve, and her organization grew.

She gives God the credit. In the dedication of her book, she wrote: "All glory be to God the Father, for He sent His Son who dared to serve us all."

While Cheryl took many steps to improve the company's performance, one important step was to invite the company's leaders to develop a personal purpose that gives their work meaning. Cheryl said that the leader must bring purpose and meaning to the work of the organization, because that is essential to creating a high-performance organization.

She said that when people believe their work matters, they arrive early and stay late. They find creative solutions to problems. They build their skills. They collaborate to ensure the success of the team. They stay in the job longer. Cheryl said that purpose and meaning at work raise the energy level, commitment, and performance of the team.

Popeyes conducted a workshop to help their leaders find their personal purpose. Then they connected their personal purpose with the Popeyes Purpose, which is to inspire servant leaders to achieve superior results. Team members are encouraged to put their personal purpose into action, because that leads to sustained superior performance.

People perform better when they have a desire to serve others, and they are intrinsically motivated because their work is meaningful. That was the conclusion of research by Adam Grant, a professor of management at the Wharton School. He studied the impact of prosocial motivation when combined with intrinsic motivation. Prosocial motivation is the desire to help others and make the world a better place. Intrinsic motivation includes personal growth and meaning. Grant said that employees display higher levels of persistence, performance, and productivity when they experience prosocial motivation and intrinsic motivation together.[82]

This is not a surprise to Christian servant-leaders. They know that when people respond to the call of Jesus to serve others, they find God's work meaningful, and they can perform at very high levels.

Summary

In summary, servant leaders move beyond Theory X and extrinsic motivation and focus on Theory Y and intrinsic motivation. They know that the highest levels of performance are the result of intrinsic motivation. Meaning is an intrinsic motivator, and there are many sources of meaning at work. Because meaning is so important, servant-leaders are meaning-makers for their colleagues, helping them to build their cathedrals. As people of faith, we are blessed because we have the opportunity to do God's work, to God's glory. And nothing can be more meaningful than that.

In the World, Not of the World

Module Eight Lecture

Welcome to the eighth module in the New Institute series on "Discovering Servant Leadership." So far in the series we have provided a Biblical framework for a life of Christian leadership, and discussed faith, love, and service as the foundation for that life. We examined the power model of leadership, which Jesus rejected, and the service model, which embodies the teachings of Jesus. We reviewed the characteristics of servant leadership, and the key practices of servant leaders. We explored organizational communities and institutional operating principles. We discussed the process of leading organizational change, and assumptions about human behavior and motivation. This is the final lecture, and it is about being in the world, not of the world.

The teachings of Jesus are counter-cultural

People have long considered power and wealth to be symbols of success. But the Bible tells us that power and wealth are false idols. They can be used as tools to help others, but in and of themselves, they do not satisfy—they cannot make us happy. They lead us away from the spiritual life that God intends for us.

The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes was written thousands of years ago. It reminds us that wealth and pleasure are short-lived and meaningless (Ecc. 2:4-11):

> I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.
>
> *I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;*
> *I refused my heart no pleasure.*
> *My heart took delight in all my work,*
> *and this was the reward for all my labor.*
> *Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done*
> *and what I had toiled to achieve,*
> *everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;*
> *nothing was gained under the sun.*

The voice in Ecclesiastes concluded that we should do good, find satisfaction in our work, enjoy our daily food and drink, and above all, "fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Ecc. 12:13).

Jesus refused earthly power and pointed us away from material wealth. Early in his ministry, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. We read this in the Gospel of Matthew:

> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' Jesus said to him: 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."' Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (Mt. 4:8-11)

Jesus declined to become an earthly king. After the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd wanted to make Jesus king—by force. But Jesus escaped from the crowd. He didn't come to be an earthly king.

As for money, Jesus made it clear in the Gospel of Luke that "life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said:

> Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Mt. 6:19-21)

After his interaction with the rich young man, Jesus told the disciples that it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19:23).

So power and wealth are symbols of success in many cultures, but Jesus rejected them. We should not seek power, we should seek to be of service. We should not seek material possessions, we should seek to be spiritually rich.

We need to embrace the fact that the teachings of Jesus are counter-cultural. That's why Christian leaders don't start with the way the world is; they start with the way *Christ* is. They start with the teachings of Jesus, and seek to live them. That's why servant leadership is not about acquiring power or wealth. It is about identifying and meeting the needs of others.

In the world, not of the world

Of course, it is hard to avoid the values of the secular, commercial culture that surround us every day. John Stott said that our model of leadership is often shaped more by culture than by Christ, even though many cultural models are incompatible with the teachings of Jesus. Stacy Rinehart said that Christ lived, taught, and modelled servant leadership for us, so it should be our true distinctive as believers. This is what should set us apart. We shouldn't be taking our cues from the culture around us.

But how do we do that? I think Jesus gave us the answer. To lead in a way that is both counter-cultural and effective, we must be *in* the world, not *of* the world.

At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed for his disciples. We read this in the Gospel of John:

> I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one (Jn. 17:14-15).

Jesus was fully engaged in the world, teaching, healing, and saving. He wanted his disciples to be fully engaged, also. We need to be in the world, loving and helping others. We do not have to be *against* the world. N.T. Wright reminds us that the kingdom Jesus inaugurated is emphatically *for* this world. After all, God loves the world– He created it!

But while we are fully engaged in the world, we do not have to measure ourselves by the world's values or its definition of "success." That gives us great freedom. We are here to be who God wants us to be, not who the world wants us to be. We are here to follow Jesus. If we do, we will be blessed, whether the world thinks we are "successful" or not.

Servant leaders not worried about "success"

There are many servant leaders who have used their gifts in loving service, without worrying about symbols of success. I can think of two medical doctors who left comfortable, successful lives to serve others—Dr. Albert Schweitzer and Dr. Tan Lai Yong.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer lived from 1875 to 1965. He was a French-German theologian, organist, author, and physician known throughout the world as a humanitarian. He received the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize for his philosophy of "reverence for life." He achieved prominence early in his career as a theologian and organist, and then decided to give the rest of his life in direct service to humanity. He studied to become a medical doctor, and then he and his wife travelled to west central Africa, where they founded a hospital in what is now Gabon. They served thousands of Africans, first in rudimentary conditions, and later in more established hospital buildings. He was still serving there at the time of his death.

Dr. Tan Lai Yong is a Singaporean medical doctor. In 1996, he was sent to China by his church as a cross-cultural worker. He went to rural Yunnan with his wife and year-old daughter, and stayed for 14 years. He diagnosed and healed villagers, trained over 500 local doctors, and gave basic medical training to farmers. He also mobilized surgeons from Kunming and Singapore to provide surgery for cleft palate, burns, and bone deformities for over 100 children. Back in Singapore now, he is a senior lecturer in the School of Public Health at the National University of Singapore.

John Howell is another example of a person who has used his gifts in loving service to others, without worrying about symbols of success. I met John many years ago when he was a sales director at a telecommunications company. Later, he left his successful career in order to serve children and families at a struggling nonprofit organization. Here is how he explains his decision:

> My life in sales was grueling. I always exceeded my quotas and made the bosses happy, but after more than twenty years, it was wearing on me. We were constantly restructuring, and firing people, and it just wasn't enjoyable. One day, returning to work after an illness, I began to wonder what it was all for. I started going back to church and doing volunteer work in the community. A friend told me about an opening with a nonprofit group, and with a 'leap of faith,' I applied for the position.
>
> I was working for one of the biggest companies in the state, earning a good salary. By contrast, the nonprofit organization was near bankruptcy… I got the job, and within weeks I knew that was where I was supposed to be.
>
> In my sales work, the focus had been on the transaction more than the people. Success was measured in money, not whether you had made a difference or changed a life. Now I can see how I am helping to change lives—how kids are growing, and getting healthier, and doing things that they couldn't do before. I also get to be a teacher, training a new generation of managers and leaders within our organization. I get tremendous meaning and satisfaction from my work.[83]

Mother Teresa: Sign of contradiction

I like to tell people that Mother Teresa didn't start out as Mother Teresa. She didn't start out with a big organization and support from people all over the world. She started out with no money—she had to beg for food and supplies. She went out into the street and helped the first person, and then the second person. Gradually other women joined her. Eventually, she founded a religious order, the Missionaries of Charity. At the time she died in 1997, she was leading 517 missions and 450 centers in over 100 countries.

There is a movie about Mother Teresa starring Olivia Hussey. At the end of the movie, there is a scene in a board room high up in a modern skyscraper, a tall building of

glass and steel. People are lined up along both sides of a long table. Mother Teresa is there with other sisters of her order, as well as a priest who has been supporting her work for many years. It is a meeting of the international organization that has been established to coordinate the work of the many centers that have been inspired by Mother Teresa. The people are good people who are doing what people in the secular world do—they set up a corporation, fly around the world to hold meetings, send out newsletters, and so forth.

Each person at the table has a bottle of water. While the meeting is going on, Mother Teresa asks one of the attendants what each bottle cost. "Three dollars," he says. "With three dollars I can send a child to school for a whole year," Mother Teresa replies. Then she asks how much it cost to rent the board room. The attendant doesn't know.

Finally, while the priest is explaining the new text message technology that will be an inexpensive way for them to send messages to each other around the world, Mother Teresa stands. She says that she has nothing against all this, but she and her sisters have chosen another way to serve the Lord. They are going back to their roots, to be the poor among the poor. Everyone at the table is shocked as she instructs one of the sisters to close the bank accounts and shut down the corporation.

Mother Teresa's decided that she was not going to be drawn into the secular commercial culture. She wasn't going to spend thousands of dollars on an international organization that coordinated the work of her centers around the world. No—she went back to her roots, back to the person-to-person love and service that had always characterized her calling to be the poor among the poor.

Later in the movie, the priest who had worked closely with her for many years told her that she had made the right decision. She responded by saying: "We must never be afraid of being a sign of contradiction to the world." The centers grew up through faith, love, and service, not by creating corporations and spending money on meetings.

A few years ago, my wife and I visited India, and spent time at the Mother Teresa Center in Calcutta. While we were there we saw her room—a small room with a bed, a dresser, a desk, and a chair. We thought of that little room as her world headquarters. She didn't need a big fancy office to inspire people all over the world. Money wasn't being spent on the trappings of office, it was being spent on children, the sick, the hungry, the poor.

Being realistic

In my experience, leaders who live the power model of leadership also hold the assumptions of Theory X and rely on extrinsic motivators. They believe that leadership is for their own advantage, employees have to be coerced, and extrinsic motivators are the way to coerce them.

I think this is why employee engagement is so bad all over the world. Surveys by Gallup indicate that fewer than 20% of employees are *actively engaged* in their work, while 60% are only moderately engaged, and as many as 20% are *actively disengaged,* which means they are working against the organization.

People who adopt the power model, Theory X, and extrinsic motivators consider themselves "realists." But they have mistaken reality. They have mistaken who we really are, and who we are capable of becoming. They do not understand that Christ is calling us to a *higher* reality. They do not understand that we are spiritual beings, guided by the Holy Spirit. They don't understand the inbreaking of the kingdom of God.

We are created in the image of God. We are not rats or pigeons in a cage, we are not donkeys to be manipulated with carrots and sticks. We are fallen, yes; but Christ has redeemed us. We are sinners, yes; but we can understand who God wants us to be. We can lead the way Jesus taught us to lead, the way we were designed to lead, the way that brings out the best in ourselves and others.

Every day, the power-mongers limit the potential of vast numbers of individuals, and then claim that people do not have much potential. In their own way, they have put people in a modern form of bondage, bondage to the negative assumptions of the secular, commercial culture.

Christian life requires a daily exodus from that bondage. Christian leaders follow Jesus and liberate those with whom they work. Christian leaders live the service model, build on Theory Y, and support intrinsic motivators to help people become their best. Christian servant leaders are the realists of a *new* reality, a *better* reality, the reality that each of us is a new creation in Christ.

Challenges to being a servant leader

There are challenges to being a servant leader. The power model is the dominant model of leadership in our culture, so becoming a servant leader may feel awkward. And servant leadership is not a quick fix. It requires an up-front investment in people. It takes time to listen to people and grow people.

When you lead with a servant's heart, some people will not understand. Some people will see you as a weak leader, or not a leader at all, because you are not pacing the floor, barking orders at your subordinates. Instead, you are listening, identifying needs, and working together with others to meet those needs.

When you lead with a servant's heart, some people will feel threatened. After all, servant-leaders are *different*. Those who are caught up in the power model of leadership, Theory X, and extrinsic motivators may not want to admit that there is another way—a

better way. They may mock you, attack you, or seek to silence you. It's too threatening to their own world view.

I learned this early in life. In the summer of 1966, I served on the staff of a student council workshop in the Midwest. I had just graduated from Roosevelt High School here in Honolulu, where I had been active in student government. The summer workshop was for high school students who had been elected to lead their fellow students in the fall. The 300 student leaders at the workshop were divided into groups, and I was a counselor working with one of the groups. I was 18, the youngest counselor they had ever hired.

Because I was young, the director of the workshop thought that it would be a good idea if one evening I addressed all of the students. Of course, he was a little worried. After all, it was the *sixties*. He told me that he didn't want me to be an "activist" and attack "the establishment." He wanted me to say something nice.

When the night came, I went to the podium and looked out at hundreds of students. In the back of the auditorium, sitting in two rows like a human wall, were the adults—the teachers and counselors who were responsible for the student councils at their schools.

I did not attack the teachers or counselors or the establishment. Instead, I attacked the students. I told them the truth as I saw it. I said that too many of their student councils were self-congratulatory cliques, busy building their resumes for their college applications. I said they just took the easy way out, and did the same activities year after year, whether anybody else wanted those activities or not. I told them that they were a hoax, pretending to care about their fellow students, when in fact they didn't care at all—they were too wrapped up in themselves. I told them that if they *did* care, if they *did* reach out to other students, if they *did* listen to the rest of the student body, they could really make a difference in the lives of their fellow students. They could find ways to make the school experience better for them. They could improve the quality of education and the quality of life at their schools.

When I finished half an hour later, there was total silence. It was clear that I had broken through the barrier of polite pretending. I had looked them in the eye and challenged them to do something more important than hold parties for themselves.

They began to clap. And then, much to my surprise, they began to come forward, down the aisle, and up onto the stage. They lifted me on their shoulders, and carried me outside. It was exhilarating. We had an exciting, honest conversation about how we could *do* more, and *be* more. We didn't have to spend the whole year just deciding on the theme song for the prom. We could connect with people. We could actually change lives for the better.

We talked, and then, one by one, the students shook my hand and headed toward their dorms for the night. As they left, I began to walk back to my room. Suddenly, I

was stopped by four men. One of them was the director of the workshop. He told me I was fired and would be leaving immediately. They marched me to my room, closed and blocked the door, and told me to pack. I was not allowed to make any phone calls, or speak to anyone, or leave any messages.

When I was packed, they marched me to the parking lot and put me in the back of a station wagon. I recall that they did not turn on the car's headlights, perhaps to avoid attention as we left the parking lot. They drove 20 miles and then dropped me off at a roadside bus stop, an open shelter with a bench, at the edge of a corn field. It was 9:30 at night. I sat alone in the dark, watching the headlights of the passing cars, waiting for the next Greyhound bus. I was eighteen years old, and I had just learned a few things.[84]

The first thing that I learned was that I didn't like being run out of town. It was very awkward, and certainly inconvenient.

The second thing I learned was that it was worth it. I had no regrets. I knew that I had connected with the students. We had a meaningful, exhilarating conversation. I was sure that some of them would remember, and a few would actually do something about it. They would figure out ways to serve their fellow students. To me, that was worth it.

What surprised me was that the adults in the back rows, the teachers and counselors, felt so threatened by what I said. What is so threatening about reaching out and caring about others and trying to make life better for them? But apparently that was hard for them to accept. My guess is that they didn't want the student leaders to do anything really meaningful, because that would be harder for the adults to control. The adults wanted the students to do what they told them to do, and they didn't want them to do very much. Just put on the homecoming in the fall and the prom in the spring.

Charles Swindoll, in his book, *Improving Your Serve*,[85] pointed out that there is a dark side to serving. The dark side includes affliction, confusion, persecution, and rejection. He said that when we grab a towel to do some foot washing, we need to keep our eyes wide open, because every once in a while, we are going to get kicked. It's just part of the humbling process God uses to shape our lives so that we bear the family likeness of his Son.

Our egos

The biggest challenge to being in the world, not of the world, may be the need to overcome our own egos. We struggle with false pride. We easily become consumed by self-interest. We live in a "me-first" culture that encourages us to do whatever we want.

In their book, *Lead Like Jesus*,[86] Blanchard and Hodges address the ego issue. They use the acronym "EGO" to mean "edging God out" due to pride and the desire to promote

oneself. This kind of EGO is filled with fear, and a need to protect oneself. This separates people from God and each other.

But there is another way to use the acronym EGO, and Blanchard and Hodges say that is "exalting God only," with humility and confidence in God. Those who exalt God only create communities and promote fellowship. Their lives are characterized by contentment, generosity, and trust.

When you exalt God only, your ego needs are met in a different way—not by power and wealth, but by the meaning that comes from living a faithful, loving, authentic life of service to others. Your ego needs are met by the knowledge that you are who God intends you to be, and you are doing what God intends you to do.

The assurance of Christ

It is challenging to be in the world, not of the world, but we cannot waiver. Christ has taught us how to live and lead. When we follow him, we will bring hope and joy to many. We will help those who need help the most. And we will do it without worrying about what the secular, commercial world thinks.

When we follow Jesus, we have his assurances. Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6). He said: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit…" (Jn. 15:5).

In addition to the assurances of Jesus, there is plenty of evidence that supports his teaching. Real-life stories testify to the effectiveness of servant leadership. Empirical research has demonstrated the positive impact of servant leadership in the workplace. There are many practices that help servant-leaders to be effective. We know that servant leadership *works*.

This makes sense. Jesus knows us. He knows how God designed us. So he has taught us a way of leading that brings out our best, and helps us to bring out the best in others.

I have said that servant leadership is counter-cultural. It is not the dominant model of leadership in most cultures, so it is not what most people experience in their daily lives. But we have reason to believe that people all over the world would willingly follow servant leaders.

I say this based on the results of the GLOBE study that began in 1991 and continued for a decade. It involved 170 researchers worldwide. Data were collected from 17,300 middle managers from 951 organizations in 62 countries.

The researchers asked the managers about various dimensions of leadership to find out which ones they thought contributed to outstanding leadership. The study found

that all cultures saw the *charismatic/value-based* dimension as contributing to outstanding leadership. This included the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and expect high performance outcomes. It also included self-sacrifice, integrity, and decisiveness. All cultures also saw *team orientation* as contributing substantially to outstanding leadership. This emphasized effective team-building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members.

The study was not specifically a study of servant leadership, but the leadership characteristics desired by all cultures are consistent with servant leadership. Servant leadership may be counter-cultural, but I believe that it is the kind of leadership that people all over the world would like to see.

For me, this is the ultimate reason that servant leadership matters. I believe that people all over the world are ready to follow servant leaders. And Christian servant leaders can lead them in ways that help the kingdom of God to break into our world.

When we pray the Lord's prayer, we pray that God's kingdom will come, on earth as it is in heaven. We can play our part in the inbreaking of the kingdom. We can live lives of faith, love, and service. As servant leaders, we can love and serve our families, our colleagues, our customers, our communities, and people all over the world. As members of the body of Christ, we can work and pray so that the kingdom *will* come, on earth as it is in heaven.

Summary

In summary, servant leadership is counter-cultural. Jesus rejected earthly power, and he pointed us away from material wealth. He prayed that his disciples would be in the world, not of the world. We need to be in the world, loving and helping others, without measuring ourselves by the world's symbols of success like power and wealth. There are challenges to being a servant leader, but we know that Jesus has taught us a way of leading that brings out our best and helps us to bring out the best in others. Servant leadership matters, because servant leaders can help the kingdom of God to break into our world.

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