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# LEADING A HEALTHY CHURCH CULTURE

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Christian Leadership



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### Leading a Healthy Church Culture – Sessions

This is an online series of lectures on Leadership by Dr. Dr. Rick Sessoms, President of Freedom to Lead International, providing organizational consulting and leadership coaching throughout the world. His web-site is [freedomtolead.net](http://freedomtolead.net)

### Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Course – Hebrews 13:7-8

*We are told to remember the faithfulness of the Lord in our lives.*

**a. Introduction:** Welcome to this opportunity to learn together about leadership. We have the opportunity to join in this time to learn. I believe that all of you know more than any one of us about leadership. So, this will be sort of a journey over the coming weeks. This first course is concerned with leading a Healthy Church Culture. This is the anchor course as such. Its two fold focus is to explore what it means to be a Christ centered leader and we will work through the meanings associated with this. The second focus of the course has to do with what it means to lead a Christ's centered church or a healthy church as the title suggests. We define a healthy church as one that is authentically applying Christ centered values. In addition, culture is central to our discussion. I believe the primary role of a 21<sup>st</sup> century church leader is to craft and care for the culture of the church. When this happened then other organizational issues tend to fall in line.

Let me share with you some things about myself. Well, I love Jesus and I've been following him since I was seventeen years old and I love working with leaders from many different parts of the world. I've been to about forty different countries around the world working with leaders over the years. I used to be a pastor and I think that pastors have some of the hardest work on earth to do. Having been in their shoes, it's obvious to me that they have a most difficult job. I want to do everything that I can to support the local church. With all of its faults and short comings, I believe in the church and believe that God has ordained the church to be the primary means through which the great commandment and commission will be fulfilled. So, I am all about the church and those who lead the church. It was in 1994 that I got involved with developing leaders and I have been working in that area ever since that time. This is going to be an interactive experience as adults learn best when they are talking and engaging in conversation. I hope we can laugh together but may end of crying together. We will also learn through one another's experiences because I think that is how

adults learn best.

**b. Hebrews 13:7-8:** First of all, a couple of Scripture verses, Hebrews 13:7-8. ‘Remember your leaders, those who have spoken God’s Word to you. Think about the impact of their lives, and imitate their faith. Jesus, the messiah, is the same yesterday and today – and forever!’ We are not sure who wrote the Book of Hebrews and so I will refer to that person as the writer. Here, the writer directs us to remember our leaders; this is a directive that we should follow. Remembering is actually one of the spiritual disciplines in the Bible even though it isn’t talked about that much. In regards to spiritual disciplines, it usually has to do with worship and prayer and Scripture reading and service. It may even include meditation, fasting, etc. But, remembering is often included in this list. And yet, as we look through Scripture, this thread of remembering is there. It starts in Genesis when God created the world and on the seventh day he rested. And he said, remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. So, it is right there in the Pentateuch. Then in Joshua chapter 4 where the Israelites had just crossed the Jordan; Joshua had led them into the promise land. Just as they had crossed the river, God instructed Joshua to appoint twelve men representing the twelve tribes of Israel and then to go back to the dry river bed and to take up twelve stones. They chose these twelve stones and then created an altar of remembrance there at Gilead just on the other side. Those famous words in Joshua chapter 4 verse 5. ‘Each of you must pick up a stone on his shoulder with which to build a memorial, one for each of the tribes of Israel. Let this serve as a sign among you, so that when your children ask in times to come, what do these stones mean, then say to them that because the waters of the Jordan were cut off, these stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.’

It is an opportunity to remember when your children ask you about these stones. This was the promise land but it wasn’t paradise. There will be times when they might even want to go back to where they had come from. When ask, their parents would tell them the story of God’s faithfulness to his people. From the New Testament, when we read in Jesus’ last hours with his disciples where he broke the bread and passed the cup. Paul in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 reflected on this; he said, ‘as you take the bread and as you take the cup remember this; do this in remembrance of me.’ Here it is again, remembering God’s faithfulness. This is threaded through in the stories of the Scriptures; it is a God ordained discipline and here it is again in Hebrews 13:7-8. We are to remember our leaders. It seems to me that it is easier to remember the bad things that have happened in life. I remember the slights, the hurts and the disappointments; all of us have experienced this. But the reality is God calls us to this discipline of remembering because it is a reminder that in the difficult journey of life, God has been faithful. He has been faithful in the past

and he is faithful to today and will continue to be faithful. So, what are we to remember about these leaders? We are to consider the outcome of their way of life. That is such an important word because it helps us to focus on the long term results of their words, attitudes and behaviors. What these behaviors over time produce, what is the sum total of their way of life. It doesn't just say to consider their way of life but it says to consider the outcome of their way of life.

Condoleezza Rice, former Secretary of State made a statement in her book recently saying that today's headlines and history judgements are rarely the same. If you are too attentive to the former, you will most certainly not do the hard work of securing the latter. This is a powerful statement. She mentioned that her office in the White House had portraits of several former US leaders she considered as her heroes. One of them was a historical figure named William Stuart; not a likely choice to grace their walls as he was a US Senator and also Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnston. Stuart was a dominant figure in the Republican Party. He was considered leading contender for the presidential nomination in 1860. His outspoken opposition to slavery leading up to the American Civil War most likely cost him that nomination. Of course, he is known best for the purchase of Alaska. He engineered a deal to pay Russia seven million dollars for what was considered then an ice box. When the purchase was ratified in the Senate in 1867, Stuart was severely criticized. The decision became known as Stuart's folly. He lost the nomination of his party in 1860, but he purchased Alaska seven years later. His convictions display a long resolved view that changed the fate and face of the United States. His contemporary, Carl Schurz, described Stuart as one of those spirits who sometimes will go ahead of public opinion instead of him tamely following their footprints. The Defense Minister of Russia recently visited Alaska with Connie Rice and said that it reminded him of Russia. She replied, 'it used to be!' Stuart did the hard work of leadership by attending less to today's headlines and more to history's judgments.

**c. Our Current Leadership Climate:** I think that was what he was getting at, 'consider the outcome, the long view.' Our current leadership climate expects coaches and pastors and CEO's and presidents to produce instant results. But Hebrews still champions those people like Stuart, remember your leaders and consider the outcome of their ways of life. Throughout the centuries the long view has been the way to secure the future. We are also to remember their faith; it says to imitate their faith. Why do you suppose the emphasis is on faith? If I had written this verse, I would have said something else, given the way I think perhaps, like to consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their way of life. But that isn't what it says, instead it says to consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Their outcome was based on their faith! What does this

mean? We tend to miss the trials and tribulations that took to get to that point. Their testimony and thus outcome came with a great deal of suffering, sacrifice and surrender. You don't see that in these words, but to get there, it must be through faith. You have got to believe in the prayer: not my kingdom, not my will, not my power, not my glory but only yours, Lord. That takes faith. So, the only way to get to that outcome is through the travail of faith? It is saying that it is outside of how we would measure success. It wasn't from their own strength as such, it was about faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. I don't know if I am interpreting the text correctly but it strikes me that it doesn't say to imitate their way of life as God doesn't want clones. Sometimes as we look at leaders, I want to be like him or I want to be like her. A lot of pastors want to be like Rick Warren or whoever. But God isn't into cookie-cutter type leaders. He is calling us to be ourselves, to live in our own skin and to imitate the faith because this is what pleases God. He has made us all unique and has never wanted us to copy one another, but instead to be what he wants us to be.

**d. Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday, Today and forever:** I get very excited about this verse, particularly because of what the last verse says, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!' I have heard this verse discussed and preached in countless sermons and seminars, but seldom in context with the previous verse. Within context of the previous verse, this statement expresses that Jesus is the ultimately leader. Jesus' commitment to raise up leaders for the church hasn't changed. This mandate from Hebrews is my favorite biblical text on leadership. Some have called it the Leadership Mandate because it contains all kinds of hope; it contains that hope that cannot be dashed. It implies that Jesus is the one who went before us; he is the one who is with us today and the same until tomorrow. He is the one who is faithful to raise up leaders in our present generation. This is such an encouraging message in today's world. In my work with leaders, sometimes I see really good leaders and sometimes I get to see not so good leaders and sometimes I see the ugly part behind the veil that comes to leadership. It comes with the territory in what we do. But through it all, we have this enduring hope because Jesus Christ is still the head of the church. Hebrews is calling us to remember our leaders who spoke the Word to us faithfully and who lived faithfully and to consider the outcomes of their way of life and to imitate that faith and remember that Jesus is the same; he doesn't change, he will continue to build his church because he has promised to do that.

## **Chapter 2 – Remembering Our Leaders**

*There are special people in our lives: mothers, fathers, pastors, mentors and others that have helped and led us through life's difficulties.*

**a. Remember Your Leaders:** Well, as we think about the exhortation from the Book of Hebrews, ‘remember your leaders.’ It would be remiss if we just walked away from it just now. I would like us to remember our leaders; stored in your brain are images of some leaders from your past. Even as we have read this verse, you may recall one or two leaders or more that have had an impact on your life. Now, when I say the word leader, maybe the faces of certain people appear in your mental screen. And maybe he or she is still living or perhaps that leader is a believer serving faithfully in the market place. Maybe that leader is a leader in the church or in business or in education or in the military. Perhaps this leader doesn’t have a formal position, a formal title, but has influenced you personally and profoundly. As you think of that leader put him or her in your mind and then think about this one question; what is the one leadership characteristic that was special about this person? In remembering our leaders, we are actually remembering Jesus’ faithfulness to us and others. So, think about this and have someone definitely in mind with specific characteristics that you remember about them. There is actually a church in Kansas City that has a wall of rocks; they do this exercise and it is an exciting thing to see. Examples can be mothers with her Godly principles; another example would be a man and his perseverance and commitment to excellence. Another person, a mother who was the religious leader of the family; she lived a Christ centered life. A friend of mine who makes it safe for me as to who I am and for Christ who comes out of who I am. There is also kindness and compassion and someone who you can talk to anytime. Another example includes a college pastor who was a great mentor of mine. This person was important to my growth a person said. A pastor is another example; a person who is very authentic. There was a college roommate of one lady who was confident in the Scriptures. There were also a couple of guys who were convinced of the truth of Jesus Christ.

As you look at those descriptors of the things that so impacted you in your lives, what do you see above and what did you hear as you heard the examples given? What patterns did you notice amongst them? There were words like relationship, investment; someone who believes in you enough and a commitment to Christ. Other words include consistency. Are these about skills or character? Would it be character, because skills would include how they went about doing what they do? Yes, what is often seen are the character traits of people; almost all the time. They talk about the things, like who that person was; they believed in me, they loved me, they were people of character and of perseverance and consistency. This isn’t to say that leadership shouldn’t learn skills. But things that impact us the most has to do with the character of leaders and people. It is about who they are and how that comes about on a consistent basis to us. As we consider the people that has

helped us, none of them are famous or known to others; this is common in our lives. These people are simply ordinary folks. Understanding this is an important part of this process because it says to us that God is faithful and he is changing the world. We often put high profile leaders on pedestals, these famous leaders and that is not to criticize them because they have their place. But the people that are really impacting the world today are people like you and me; the ordinary people around us. They are the people that live and breathe beside us every day. I get so emotional and excited about these verses. In thinking about this and going through this exercise; we see that Jesus is faithful today, just like he was yesterday and will be tomorrow. Jesus is raising up leaders in our lives that have impacted us and guess who he is going to use to impact others? You! He is faithful and continuing to raise up leaders like you and like me in order to impact the world around us. That is how it happens. As I have said, the high profile leaders have their place, but it is really about people like you that have that opportunity and influence in the lives of others.

**b. My Personal Story:** For my own story; I was in seminary in South Carolina and I had first graduated from Bible College where I had studied the Bible and theology and pastoral courses and Greek and Hebrew, etc. I applied to my denomination to go into a pastor's position and wrote to a lot of people and didn't get one letter in response. I didn't know what else to do so I went to seminary. The second year in seminary, I was just really so fired up and I wanted to share all that I had learned with somebody. I convinced a little church, about seventy miles from the school, to take me on as their pastor. They needed a weekend pastor with forty five members of the congregation, farmers with their church out in the middle of a corn field. So, I showed up at this little church and began to preach which I did four times every Sunday. I preached during Sunday school and in the Morning Service and during Training Union at night and then again in the evening. I started in John chapter 1 and I started sharing all of this shard with these farmers. The church decreased from forty five to thirty five and then to twenty five and then to fifteen and then finally it got down to six people. I had no idea what the problem was and the less people that was there, the more I screamed. I just kept giving it to them. During the time I was at school during the week, they decided that they were going to have a revival in this little church. They invited an evangelist, a great big guy who had been a wrestler at one time. He didn't have any teeth nor any education, but he began to preach to these people sharing the Gospel with these people and people began to come to Christ. They kept coming to Christ and the revival went from one week to two weeks and then to three weeks. I had no idea what was going on and I resigned from the church. I decided that I didn't want to be a pastor or involved with church ministry at all. Well, they then invited this guy to be their pastor and

in turn they had to become a Baptist church instead of a Methodist church. The church began to grow and the building was enlarged. To my great sadness, all this was happening. I returned to seminary for my last year and decided at that point that I didn't want to be in ministry at all.

My wife and I decided that I would go to graduate school where I would get a counseling degree. So, I had been accepted to go to Trinity in Chicago. That would have been a horrible mistake because I am not a counselor. Anyway, I was getting ready; my wife was graduating from her undergraduate school and I was finishing this seminary. Well, we had just graduated and we were just about to pack our truck to go to Chicago when my phone rang. It was a pastor that I had never met before; somehow he had gotten my name from some other distance person and rang me on the phone. He was looking for an assistant pastor; he lived in York, Pennsylvania. You know that I had grown up in the Raleigh, North Carolina area and had attended school in Georgia and then in South Carolina and had never travelled up to the northern states. He said he was looking for a youth pastor and asked whether or not I was interested. I replied quickly, no, I wasn't. I don't have any interest in being in the ministry. Are you sure, he asked? Again, I replied, yes, I'm sure. He said that I was now ready to learn. Again, I replied, brother, I am just not interested. Well, would you be willing to come up to visit the church? There is nothing to lose; I was a poor seminary student and he was going to give me a free weekend with good food, etc. in Pennsylvania. This guy's name was David Mueller and he said something to me that changed my life. If you come here to be my assistant pastor; it will be more what we can do for you. I get emotional everything I tell that story because that experience transformed my life and that is why I do what I do today. As I went to work with this pastor, he invested his life in me; he had three years of Bible College and I had this seminary degree; this didn't bother him. He poured his life into me; he loved me. He was a disciplinarian and wasn't easy on me but guided me sternly. I will never forget the first sermon I preached; he said that I had all the right tools and did the correct exegesis but asked what exactly was I trying to say? That was the kind of relationship we had. We pushed brooms together; I learned to serve with him as we built an addition on the church.

I have gone on to serve in various capacities around the world, but in so many ways, what I do today is a debt of gratitude. Several years back, David had a stroke and was put in a wheel chair. When I rang him on the phone, he was just beaming, talking about the young man that he was mentoring at that time. He was still doing it and he never left Pennsylvania. He impacted the planet through people like me. So that is the power of remembering leaders and God's faithfulness in our lives. Thank you for letting me share that; David passed away about two years ago and it was



amazing to see the number of people that came and were sharing their gratitude for a person who had never travelled outside of Pennsylvania. I remember he did take a trip to Mexico once and got so sick; he said that he would never travel again. So, I think God for these memories of people in my life.

### Chapter 3 – Global Trends Affecting Leadership

*Youth, urbanization and globalization have created certain trends for leadership today.*

**a. Youth:** Well, we need the encouragement of Hebrews chapter 13 and the memory of the leaders in our past because leadership has become increasingly difficult today due to several global trends. These trends increasingly involve youth, urbanization and globalization. For example, young people in Belarus tend to have more in common with people in Baltimore than they do with people in their own neighborhood. So, the global trends are deeply impacting leadership and our capacity to lead. It is making leadership a much more difficult challenge than it has been in the past. The first global trend is a rising cynicism and this isn't just among young people, everybody is growing more cynical. A barometer that reflects this social attitude is a bumper sticker that reads, 'don't vote, it will only encourage them.' People are pessimistic about the future; they are pessimistic about leaders in almost every aspect of life whether it is business or education or the church, etc. It is difficult to lead when people have a high level of cynicism that exists today.

**b. Shifting Power:** The second global trend is shifting power; I have been told that there is more computer power in this small computer than existed on earth in 1950. That means that those with technology have more power today than those with titles. So, the old way of leading simply doesn't work. IBM once referred to their mainframes as masters and the terminals that sat on our desks as slaves. Some of you may not be old enough to even remember that kind of language. But in the computing world of today, the newer relationship is client server. Power has gone to people, to the clients, to people with access to that information. With access to information at our fingertips, what does that mean? Power has shifted away from those in the corner office to those who have this computing power that have this access to information wherever they may be. Thomas Freedman wrote the book, 'the World is Flat.' He also wrote, 'the Olive Tree.' In the World is Flat, he contends that this power shift is responsible for the flattening of hierarchies and the movement of center of gravity from the powerful boss to the empowered people. Today a younger person from a lower cast in India can be literally connected to the whole world just sitting in their village. This shift is threatening Indian's cast system for the first time in hundreds, if not thousands of years. In today's

client server world, yesterday's master slave, that power and authority motif just doesn't work anymore and to stand up in front of people and to think that you have authority isn't even a relative conversation in today's society.

I remember several years ago, I was ask to give a lecture, a three hour lecture to a group of PhD students at Regent University on leadership development. I had done my research on the area of leadership development. There were seventy five students, brand new PhD students in this huge lecture hall. At Regent, these halls are the most modern thing you could imagine. It had theatre seats with long tables wired up for all kinds of technology. So, they are all sitting there with their computers and I started to talk. I go on for about an hour and a half and I noticed a young man sitting on the front row about three people in. I noticed that he never looked up or at me the entire time. He was just staring at his computer screen. Well, I kept on going but at break time, this fellow comes to me and introduces himself. He was a twenty seven years of age that inherited millions of dollars and he is not running a foundation. I didn't know why he was taking this doctoral program. So, I started to tell him a little about myself but he stopped and said that he knew everything about me. How is that, I asked? I'm been googling you for the last hour and a half plus every reference that you mentioned when you shared something from a book or a quote. Interestingly, these kinds of examples give us a reality check in our lives; we live in a world of computing power and those with it hold a different sort of sway. In today's world, the power and authority motif simply is no longer effective and so there has to be a different way to lead in today's world.

**c. Globalization:** The final global trend has to do with changing contracts. Permanent jobs are becoming scarcer, while the temporary work force is on the rise. More people are more self-employed than they were twenty five years ago, many of whom not by their own choice. Project teams are formed to provide a service and when the project is finished after a year or so, the team is disbanded and those people are looking for another job. The organization's loyalty to people and people's loyalty to the organization is becoming a relic of the past. The new contract promises employment only in exchange for commitment for excellence. There is a little cartoon that is both cute and sad showing resumes of people who can replace us. It is no surprise in such a climate that employees are hiring themselves out to the highest bidder. I was consulting with a Christian organization recently; being an older organization, some of their people have been there for thirty five or more years. They have been missionaries in this organization and as they began to share about when they first came into the organization, they were asked, 'are you called and committed to this ministry for life?' They had to sign a statement that they were committed and called to this

organization. But over the last five to ten years the organization has shifted, saying we are no longer committed to you and if you don't keep up your skills you will be out of a job. So, the land underneath the employees has radically shifted. People no longer sense any loyalty from the organization and they are hiring themselves out. IBM, a number of years ago moved from what they called life-time employment to now life-time employability.

There is a huge shift in thinking and therefore it is difficult to inspire commitment. We now live in that kind of a world. Have you seen these trends that I'm referring to? How are you reacting to those? What do you think about this rising cynicism, shifting power and changing contracts? Have you experienced that yourself? Have you seen that in the emerging generations? One person from the audience said that there was a rising distrust which is part of cynicism. Anytime you can go global with a thought or picture or image which the internet allows us to do, you have a sense of power and with that comes distrust. We used to talk about the haves and the have nots, but now there is a whole new definition to this and how to get to be a have from a have not is not as clear as it used to be. Another person refers to hopelessness being far away from cynicism; there is behavior in the world that makes us think in these terms. There is increased poverty leading to increased starvation with many areas in the world, thus increasing hopelessness. In my way of thinking, this rising cynicism is due to the access of information. Back when John Kennedy was president, he was a rascal in some of his doings. The press and media weren't on top of that even going back to F.D.R. We know about his charades as well. Because of that, we held these leaders in much higher esteem than we do now. Now, this access brings these leaders into more focus and living color into our living rooms every night. We don't perceive there is much secrecy any more. We have sort of done this to ourselves. We have made caricatures out of our leaders because of the access to information. I think those two can play hand in hand perhaps. Another person from the audience says that many Christian leaders would confess one thing but then you see a different side to them and perhaps this has increased the cynicism that we are talking about. There are things that have entered the Christian culture that are no longer necessarily Christian; there is no longer authenticity with Christians.

So, these trends make it very important for us to reassess what leadership is all about. I want to submit to you that as we talk about Christ centered leadership; I believe this effectively deals with all three of these issues in a very powerful way.

## Chapter 4 – The Shadow of a Leader – A Case Study

*The Shadow of a Leader is an example of what leadership can devolve into.*

**a. The Shadow of a Leader:** We have been talking about remembering our leaders and we have moved on to discuss some of the challenges of leading in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Today, we have a case study called a Shadow of a Leader. It is not a true story, but you may recognize some of the characters as we go along.

“The Shadow of a Leader: The crowds listened attentively as the program began. The celebration was organized to recognize Dr. Robert Abella and twenty years of successful ministry. In addition Dr. Abella was being ordained as the president of the Grace of God denomination in the country of Acacia. Praise for Dr. Abella was observed in many ways. Dr. Abella had been a young gifted Christian leader. He had been a consistent voice of integrity and change in the church in his community. He founded the Fishers of Men Ministry - FMM, a ministry of equipping church leaders to reach their own people. Everyone rose to their feet as Dr. Abella was announced as the new president of the Grace of God denomination. The charge was given for all to awaken from their slumber and make the Grace of God denomination the shadow of a great leader. No one in the audience would disagree with the impact of Dr. Abella’s ministry. But one person was overheard to say, ‘if Fishers of Men Ministries is his shadow, then the Grace of God denomination is in trouble. A cruel assessment looking back; you would say that Robert who was called in 1990 was the same person on the platform in 2010. Marian and Sergio, the only two members of the originally Fishers of Men Ministry left the celebration and talked about how Robert’s testimony had changed. The first years of FMM were exciting; at that time Robert was forty five years old. He had grown up with a father who ruled with an iron hand. Because Robert was his interest, he was often harshly punished as a child; in fact, he could never forget his father’s most often used words, ‘you fool, can’t you do anything right?’ Robert was also ridiculed by others when he was growing up because of his intelligence. He could still remember times of great rejection. When he became an adult, he was driven to make a difference. When the opportunity came, he started FMM.

Even though he now enjoyed a great deal of success, there was always a nagging sense of self-doubt and insecurity. Early on, Robert was a team player and inspired others with his vision and encouragement. Churches welcomed FMM evangelism training which proved ideal for those who were eager to reach their friends for Christ. As FMM grew under Robert’s leadership, he was invited to travel and teach and in the process, he became a sought after conference speaker. It wasn’t long however before the early signs boss sickness began to appear. At first, no one seemed to have

noticed, there was no objection when Robert took a large office. After all, this is common among church leaders in Acacia as is a privilege of a car and driver. Marian and Sergio could not help from remembering however that Robert had previously lived a humble and simply life. Also, no one seemed to think it strange when Robert spent less time with the FMM team. As pressure on his time increased, his spontaneous prayer time gave way to a weekly chapel session which was always led by the director and who by now was always addressed as Dr. Abella. The difficulty of seeing Dr. Abella without scheduling an appointment should have been a danger sign. In fact the policy was put in place for restricting access to Dr. Abella. As Marian and Sergio discussed the past, they agreed that they should have been more forthright with Dr. Abella who seemed changed after an embezzlement of mission funds took place. Looking back, they could see how he had lost all sense of trust in others and willingness to delegate. He instituted a policy insisting that he approve all ministry and financial decisions. This action resulted in many delays and many lost ministry opportunities. Instead of encouraging new ideas and initiatives, Dr. Abella no longer tolerated deviation from his directive. Those who often gave opinions, staff and board members, suffered in many ways ranging from loss of faith to being fired. Morale began to decay in all departments of FMM. Promising young leaders left as quickly as possible hoping to find an atmosphere that offered more accessible support. It was then that Marian and Sergio realized that the original sense of community with their friend and brother probably was lost. Marian and Sergio were forced to conclude Dr. Robert Abella had fallen guilty of misusing the power of his office to become a means for self fulfilment and advancement. Both agreed that fellow Christians including the two of them did not help this struggling man of God as he was distracted from his Christ centered leadership as he received more and more expressions of worldly honor.’

**b. Three Questions:** Rick now instructs us to consider these three questions: How would you describe Robert Abella’s early leadership? How would you describe his later leadership? And perhaps the most important question; what explanations can you give for some of Robert’s actions as a leadership. There are clues throughout the narrative. So, consider the story and try to answer the questions.

## Chapter 5 – Discussion of the Case Study – the Shadow of the Leader

*Truly a story of pride coming before a fall.*

**a. Taking Your Eyes off the Lord:** So, what is going on with Robert Abella? A member of the audiences comments that he has taken his eyes off the Lord. He started out wanting to make a

difference. Another member of the audience thinks that he would say that was the Lord's calling in his life and he was the chosen of the Lord and thus special. The Lord is speaking to me and through me. True, these things are necessary in ministry to be successful but yet the control among leaders is almost always due to fear; trying to deal with fear and thus fear gives way to control. Looking from the outside in, it is very obvious that this person is in trouble spiritually. He probably wouldn't describe it that way himself. Part of the difficulty we see in leaders is a real latent danger particularly in the Christian church as we have tended to combine spiritual leadership with positional leadership. When this happens the people in those positions become rather untouchable. That is a recipe for a toxic kind of a situation. Has anyone seen this in their own observation? A member of the audience thinks that this is a very universal thing that has been happening through the history of mankind. Part of it is concerned with the desire of the Israelites demanding a king. We want leadership, we want the Robert Abellas to come and show us that they are making it where we can't. So, it is a fuel and we don't build accountability in. The people want a leader and the leader wants to be a leader. It starts out noble with people doing great things. When we force people into a leadership role, we do things to justify it and raise ourselves above the rules.

You mentioned the embezzlement that may have caused him to move toward this control motif. What else do you think may have pushed him toward this? His insecurity and self-doubt was increasing and thought perhaps that he had to work harder to prove that he was secure and deserved to be in the position that he was in. We now have all these tools that work on batteries and often they need recharging. We are like that where our battery is the community and Robert was getting away from community; he was getting a lot of stokes in being called to speak in different places. He was being called away from the community that he originally invested in. As his battery ran down, he replaced it with fake batteries and other things. I think that is a problem that all of us run into in losing the community in keeping a certain focus.

Another person explained in a conversation they had with their pastor once, asking him who holds him accountable. He explained that there was a board that oversaw his working and leadership. Later, we realized and learned that he was very fearful in answering that question; he was challenged by the question.

**b. The Dark Side of Leadership:** So back to the Case Study; there was some illusion to his childhood in growing up with his father. Do you suppose that impacted him as an adult? Another member of the audience said, I know that I was very fearful of my daughters as they were growing

up and I was very controlling in regards to that. There is a book called the ‘Dark Side of Leadership,’ it is a fascinating book that contends that most high impact leaders are driven people. That would drive Christian leaders to be effective, impacting, fruitful and productive and if not dealt with, those issues that drive them to be successful in their pastoring a church, to have a successful ministry, etc. If those issues are not dealt with, then those very things that caused them to be successful will derail them later on in their ministry lives. It is sad news and it has happened to so many. For pastors, part of our motif in the Christian church today is about success. There is this driving attitude in pastoring the church to be that person who is out there, being well known and successful. But the medicine it takes to get there is same medicine that will kill you if you don’t learn how to deal with it. Studies show that with high impact leaders there is a typical pattern that exists. They often come from backgrounds with three common elements: absence father, a dominant mother and a traumatic experience in late puberty or early adolescent life. The problem here, this is the very same profile of most criminals that are in prison. It has to do with how you are going to focus on and follow your energy. For all the good motivation behind so many Christian leaders; the fact there is a dark side to those people like Dr. Abella who start out with this sense of calling and ambition. All these elements that is championed and cheered by those who are looking for a leader. If that person doesn’t stay in community, that person isn’t mindful as there needs to be that voice from without. Otherwise, we get to feeling that we are untouchable and spiritual, even though we are not. These are some of the real pitfalls we see in leaders worldwide.

I have a film clip that I would like to get some feedback on. It is taken from a film from 1962; I hope you can see it. It is fifty years old this year; it was a very raw story called, ‘the One Who Flew over the Coot Coo’s Nest. It is a story of a mental ward that was run by nurse Ratchet. Power and control had become her favorite tool to break the spirit of the patients that she was committed to care for and help. Following that clip is a scene where patients wanted to watch the World Series in Base Ball, but there were rules against this. You will see a very young Jack Nickerson in the film; he is attempted to encourage the patients to vote for permission to watch this World Series.

## **Chapter 6 – Discussion of the Movie Clip**

*Power and Control creates a situation where the ground rules always change.*

**a. Power and Control:** The power and control can be hidden in a very calm, almost spiritual tone that actually breaks the spirit of people which destroys people in the process. What do you think about what you’ve heard regarding Dr. Abella and Nurse Ratchet? Was it depressing and

discouraging? Is it reflective of what you have experienced and what you have seen in Christian leaders? A person from the audience says that she thinks that the ground rules have changed. The goal posts are constantly moving depending on the whims and control of the leader. Another person says that they can easily destroy a person's ministry. Another person: you asked if it was depressing; it is depressing but this isn't the final chapter. We, as leaders need to be cognate because it is very typical that there can be a disconnect between somebody who was part of the team but now elevated above the team. Anytime you have a power imbalance, you have a power broker and this is unhealthy. We need to create accountability factors that minimize a power imbalance.

**b. Misuse of Power:** Three simple statements to finish this segment: misuse of power among leaders is epidemic today and I want to emphasize that this is true in the Christian church and particularly true in the evangelical church. We have created a power culture that is very toxic and carries with it a lot of harm in the evangelical church today. For a lot of reasons that I will not go into theologically, but yet it is particularly true within our own ranks and it seems to be growing, especially in the majority world where we have exported our brand of Christianity within those contexts. Secondly, church leaders are unaware when they misuse power. I think that Dr. Abella would not have described himself as an abuser of power; he would have simply seen himself as being faithful to his calling and pursuing the mission to which he was committed. As I work with leaders around the world, we have created an atmosphere where we have connected spiritual leadership with positional leadership. And often times these people find themselves being expected to speak for God. At other times, assuming that is their role and privilege; they move into a place where they are using God language and are not even aware when they misuse and abuse their power. This is a big problem. Thirdly, the only solution that I can suggest is that leaders must give access to others that can tell them and will tell them the truth. This is all about community, but it must begin with the leaders. This is part of the difficulty in connecting spiritual leadership with positional leadership, those with positions that also have spiritual power or the misuse of spiritual power and the misuse of positional power often move themselves into a place where they simply will resist others that try to provide help, whether it is a Marian and Sergio in our case study or otherwise. It is the rare person who will take the risk of speaking into a person like that because of the risk of being rejected.

As I work with leaders and you move into leadership roles in your life, be aware that if you are a leader with responsibility to initiate the relationships that are going to keep you in community so that you can have that court jester if you will to continue to speak into your life from the outside.



A person that has the access and authority to speak in such a way as Jonathan spoke to David. I am curious about those three statements. Are there any comments from the audience? A person from the audience: I would say misuse of power among leaders is indeed epidemic today; I would say that it is part of the human nature. It has been going on since creation. The fall created polarization and from that comes those who have power and those who don't; it has been abused all along. I remember the phrase: power corrupts absolutely. I don't think it is anything new except that we are more aware of it today because of the technology that we now have of connectivity. We see the abuse of power all over the world and the devastating effect it has. You are absolutely correct; misuse of power is part of the human condition. The speaker: I suppose, what I should emphasize here is that, we have created within the evangelical context an unusual situation where power is being misused in the name of God. This is because the evangelical church has been very good at putting leaders on a pedestal. We have our heroes and some of those have been faithful but many have not been faithful in being able to handle that power. I think the evangelical experience over the last sixty or seventy years now has proven to be a context where unlike other church traditions of the past, we have tended to create egos. We have tended to create certain personalities and not just a pope but many of them. We are creating these kingdoms called local churches; our whole megachurch movement has created this sort of momentum that is being literally exported all over the world. So, in that sense, that is what I'm speaking about being epidemic.

**c. Abuse is Rampant in Today's Leadership:** From the Audience: I concur with you and the challenge in today's church; it would be easier to build a house than to renovate one. We in the Christian church today are dealing with a lot of people who no longer want to hear the Christian message because they have been damaged by Christianity. Why would a person choose something that is going to hurt them; they don't want to be burned again by Christianity. I think we now have a whole world where it is easy to elevate our Christian leaders into god like creatures they aren't. Another person in the audience: are you saying that the sin of Adam and the power and abuse that has been rampant and we, in an evangelical culture have combat Christians? The lecturer: yes, that is what I am saying. We have branded it spiritual. Another person from the audience: We are missing the whole aspect of humility in our lives. The speaker: again, we have branded it Christian in so many ways which has become the ultimate danger. After World War II, there was a sense of triumphant thinking where some of the most well-known Christian ministries began. These included the Billy Graham Association, Bill Bright with his Campus Ministry. Billy Graham started the Billy Graham crusades and Bill Bright began Campus Crusade for Christ. Those were militant words

because we wanted to conquer the world. These ministries did great things but it created a culture within evangelicalism and with the advent of the church growth movement in 1980's with Fuller Seminary, an emphasis that bigger was better. The more people we can reach for Christ, the larger our organization is, the better it must be and the more effective it will be at reaching the masses for Christ. What this created in the process was the need for these leaders to be on top of the heap of these massive organizations. Along the way we have tended to Christianize some things that are not necessarily Christian, but yet have done it in the name of God in order to continue this triumphant mentality.

This is not to say that all of this is bad; there are wonderful things that have come out of this generation. But the reality is in the last twenty or so years, we are now paying a heavy toll as a result of the culture, not the fruit but the culture of Christian organizations that era produced. So this is a little of the background and history we have arrived to where we are within the evangelical movement. So, are there any other questions or comments? A colleague of mine made a statement that in every culture around the world; the Christian church has adopted the power motif of that culture for their pastors. So for example within the Indian context, pastors tend to function like a little guru. In Latin American, they tend to function like little communist bosses. In American, they tend to function like little CEO's. In China they function like strong men and in Africa they function like tribal chiefs. It is that dominate power motif that we have adopted from the culture right into the evangelical church because it is a perception of how we become successful and how we reach more people. These are some of trips and pitfalls along the way as we look at the need for relooking at what really is Christ centered leadership in today's world. In order to address this question, I'd like you to take some time together to reflect on this question, assuming that power and control can be destructive; what tendencies might cause you to misuse power or seek unhealthy control? I think that we all have tendencies in this arena. We all know that power and control can be harmful. So, what is it within you and what is it within me that can cause us to misuse that power or seek unhealthy control in our lives?

## **Chapter 7– Leading with a Towel – John 13:1-17**

**a. The Passover:** After having the good news of remembering our leaders, we talked about the belly of the beast. Let's look at how it could be. This session is titled 'Leading with a Towel'; John chapter 13 verses 1-17 is fairly familiar. The background on this passage includes the time of Passover; it was right at the end of Jesus' life. This most sacred of Jewish feasts would have been

observed by upward to three million people and these people had descended upon Jerusalem for that celebration week. Word spread that Jesus of Nazareth was going to show up. He was on his way to the feast. It was no wonder that thousands lined the road as Jesus made his way into Jerusalem. As he passed by, they chanted hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. It is important to remember what the crowd was affirming that day by their words and actions. Placing palm branches on the road was reminiscent of the time forty years before that day when this very same welcome was given to the son of Maccabee on the eve of his conquest of the Syrian forces. On this day, the crowds were saying in effect do it again Lord, do it again Jesus as you did in Simon's day. God save the king. God, give him strength that he may purge unrighteous rulers and destroy wicked nations with the Word of his mouth. He is the king that has come to shatter and smash and to make right what is so wrong; hosanna, come Lord. But we know from hindsight that Jesus wasn't the kind of king they wanted and expected. They expected a conquering king and he disappointed those Passover celebrators, those pilgrims that week. He disappointed his own disciples in fact. But in so doing he fulfilled their most profound need and our need as well. Jesus knew the time had come to leave this world and go back to the Father.

Now before the Passover Festival, Jesus realized that his hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. By supper time, the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him. Because Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into his control, that he had come from God, and that he was returning to God, therefore he got up from the table, removed his outer robe, and took a towel and fastened it around his waist. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel that was tied around his waist. Then he came to Simon Peter, who asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later on you will understand." Peter told him, "You must never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you cannot be involved with me." Simon Peter told him, "Lord, not just my feet, but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus told him, "Whoever has bathed is entirely clean. He doesn't need to wash himself further, except for his feet. And you men are clean, though not all of you." He knew who was going to betray him. That's why he said, "Not all of you are clean." When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer robe, he sat down again and told them, "Do you realize what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right because that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you must also wash one another's feet. I have set an

example for you, so that you may do as I have done to you. Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, a servant is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. If you understand these things, how blessed you are if you put them into practice!’

**b. Washing of Feet:** It was just before the Passover festival; Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave the world and return to the Father. Having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the end. This truth is made graphically clear a few days later where Jesus and his friends who had gathered for a meal. The streets and roads of Palestine were simply dirt and in dry weather, they were deep in dust where in wet weather, it would become mud with cows and animals roaming the streets, you can imagine that it wasn’t just dirty mud, but it was stinky mud. The shoes a person wore in that day were mostly sandals with flat soles. So, every walk in the street soiled the feet and that is why that just inside the door way of homes sat a basin of water with a towel. The custom was for a servant to greet visitors and wash their feet. But on this night, Jesus gathers his disciples for the meal, but the wash basin sat unemployed. Where was the servant? Of course the disciples had their minds on more noble thoughts. The talk of the week had ignited their imagination, the kingdom of God with dreams of thrones and power and glory. In fact Luke tells us that they were conflicted about which one of them would be the greatest in this kingdom. The wash basin sat a new; everybody in the house had dirty feet and dirty hearts. So, Jesus got up from the table and prepared himself and commenced to wash the feet of his followers. Here is Jesus, the King of Kings washing filthy feet and drying them with a towel. Here is the king whose leadership, whose symbol of authority is a towel. The use of the towel reveals to three enduring principles. Jesus let us see a secure sense of self. The towel dramatizes Jesus’ whole life and ministry. Washing his disciple’s feet was no isolated event. On the contrary what he did that night in the upper room vividly portrays the whole ministry he made from the Father and the journey he made into the world and back to the Father. He knew where he had come from, where he was going and who he belonged to, and this made all the difference.

Darrell Johnson pointed out the symbolism in Jesus’ act. John records that Jesus rose from supper just as he had risen from his eternal throne. He laid aside his garments in verse 4 just as he had laid aside his glory in heaven, just as he had laid aside his privileges as the Son of God. Then he washed mortal men’s feet, performing the most menial act of service just like his death on the Cross as a common criminal. When Jesus had finished washing their feet, in verse 12 John says that he took up garments and returned to his place of honor, just as he was taken up from the grave and seated again with God the Father. Jesus used the towel that night to illustrate what the early church

later would sing about in the hymn in Philippians 2; who being in the very nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a Cross. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name that is above every name, the name of Jesus where every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. So, he let know the secure sense of exactly who he was; secondly, Jesus met the deepest needs of those he led. Jesus said in verse 12, do you understand what I have done for you? This wasn't just a rhetorical question; obviously, they had not understood what he had done for them. Peter didn't understand according to verse 6 where he questions Jesus about washing his feet. Are you going to wash my feet, Peter asked? Jesus tells him that unless he washes his feet, he will have no part of me and Peter replied; then wash all of me.

This is not just a leadership lesson in humility; Peter could have understood that. The need of these disciples was far beyond their dirty feet. They had a spiritual need; a profound deep need. Who was going to sit where, was the question on their minds and hearts? He had got on his knees; this really humbles me, for if my only view of God is that of a supreme king in the top run of a latter, then I am always wondering how I am going to get to him and worrying how I am doing! Am I making progress toward him; what can I do to make my way up to him? But when the king of kings is kneeling before me in self-emptying love; the kind of love that knocks me off the latter and out of the center. Jesus was helping Peter and the disciples to understand that we meet the Living God at the bottom run of the latter. Jesus was revealing the king's own idea about what it means to be a king. And finally, Jesus calls us to pay it forward; what a powerful principle! After washing their feet, Jesus said to his disciples you call me teacher and Lord and rightly so for that is what I am. Now that I am your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you should wash one another's feet. Some Christian traditions have foot washing services; I like those services and I've taken part in them and have enjoyed them very much. They take this command from Jesus to mean that we are to literally wash each other's feet. But when Jesus washed his disciple's feet, Jesus' focus didn't seem to be on the ritual itself. When Jesus washed their feet, he was saying I lay down my life for you. His ultimate intent in washing another person's feet can only be fulfilled after the worship service has ended. Listen again, 'if I your Lord wash your feet, you should also wash my feet.' Is that what he said? No, but that is what I would have expected Jesus to say; if he had said, 'now that I washed

your feet, you wash my feet; we would be standing in line for the privilege to be first with the towel. But he said, now that I have washed your feet, you wash one another's feet.

**c. Standing Under:** You see that I am a debtor to Jesus the king for the price he has paid for me. If I understand Jesus' instructions here, my neighbor is now the appointed agent authorized to receive what I owe the master. Now the point that Paul makes in his Letter to the Ephesians makes sense. In chapter 5:18 Paul exhorts us to be filled with the Spirit. Then he develops the signs of Spirit's filling; the last sign in verse 21 is being subject to one another in the fear of Christ. The Greek word for subject literally means standing under. Paul is telling us that the mark of a life filled with the Spirit of King Jesus is a standing under. It is placing my life at the disposal of other people; Paul then works out this submitting, this standing under in three spheres of our common life: in marriage, in family, and between employer and employee. In these three spheres, both parties, according to verse 21, are to stand under. So, what does this mean for leaders? It means that my wife is the appointed agent authorized to receive what I owe Jesus Christ. I wash Jesus' feet as I wash her feet. My two children are the appointed agents that are authorized to receive what I owe Jesus. I wash Jesus' feet as I wash their feet; my colleagues are free to lead and our partners are the appointed agents authorized to receive what I owe Jesus. I wash Jesus' feet as I wash their feet. Washing the feet of those I lead means believing in them enough to empower them with the authority and resources and information as well the accountability they need to be the best they can possibly be. Washing the feet of those I lead, means creating an environment like Jesus did that is safe enough for them to risk and sometimes fail in their risks and encouraging them to risk again. Washing the feet of those I lead means that I don't have to be the source of every good idea, but we discover the dream together. Washing the feet of the people I lead means creating an atmosphere where they are free to tell me the truth, especially when the truth isn't very good news for me. It also means allowing people to express their passion and who don't compromise principle for profit. It means treating each person with a sacred understanding that they are uniquely crafted in the image of God, their creator and not in mine. It means enabling them to make decisions and pursue their God given visions; washing their feet means celebrating their accomplishments and serving them, not to serve me but so that they will pay it forward.

Now, perhaps as leaders, there is a tension in us as I say these things. As a leader this way of relating to people is not normal. Such a way of relating to people reverses the order somehow. It is subversive, destabilizing, it upsets and if that is the tension we feel, that is precisely what Jesus intends. We are now feeling, not just understanding but we are feeling the Gospel of the Kingdom.

His order turns everything right side up. He changes our whole concept of power and authority and of status. Remember what he said to his disciples when they were arguing about who would be greatest in the kingdom of God. He said you know those who would be recognized as rulers of the gentiles have lorded it over them, but it is not so among you. Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant and whoever wishes to be the first shall be slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve. The King of Kings who leads with a towel inaugurates a kingdom of foot washers. It deletes the image of clamoring for power; people climbing over one another to get to the top. Jesus' example even puts to rest the notion that I wash your feet so that you wash my feet. Rather, I wash your feet so that in turn you can wash another person's feet. That which sets apart Christ centered leaders is brought into being by the self-emptying love of Jesus. When leaders belong to King Jesus, we can no longer write on our resume, 'I don't do feet.' That is precisely what leaders do because that is what he does; that liberating leadership. It is a leadership that fulfills the highest priority and the highest potential of the needs of those we lead. Perhaps the best test of a Christ centered leader is to ask; are those who we lead growing as people? Are they becoming healthier? Are they becoming wiser? Are they becoming freer? Are they likely themselves to become Christ centered leaders? And what is the benefit of my leadership on the poor, on the underserved, the least in society, those who cannot serve me in return?

**d. Mother Teresa:** The 20<sup>th</sup> century was blessed by a woman who obviously had her feet washed by this King. Some may argue with her theology, but it's kind of touch to argue with her life. Anjeze Gonxhe Bojaxhiu was born and raised in Albania. For years she washed the feet and the hands and head and bodies of the poorest of the poor in Calcutta, India and Manilla, the Philippines and other cities. God also used her to touch those who were not poor and one such person was Malcolm Muggeridge. He was formerly a prominent broadcaster with the BBC in London. Muggeridge was so touched by Mother Teresa; he wrote a book to her honor entitled, 'Something Beautiful for God.' He wrote these words, 'to choose as Mother Teresa did, to live in the slums of Calcutta amidst all the dirt, disease and misery signified a spirit so indomitable, so intractable, a love so abounding that I felt abashed.' He went on to tell of an experience he had in Calcutta to which he responded by retreating to his comfortable hotel room and complaining about the retched condition of the city. Then he wrote these words, 'I ran away and stayed away, but Mother Teresa moved in and stayed; that was the difference. She a slightly built nun, a few rupees in her pocket, not particularly clever or gifted in the art of persuasion, came with Christian love shining about her.'

In 1968 Muggeridge conducted a television interview with Mother Teresa. From a technical standpoint, the interview was terrible, but the public response was overwhelming. Reflecting on that interview Muggeridge wrote about discussions that were taking place how to use mass media for the Christian purposes. All manner of devices were tried from learned dialogues to pop versions of the Psalms. Here's the answer, 'just get someone shining with overwhelming Christian love, get someone for whom the world has met and the service of Christ is everything. Get someone reborn into servitude to the ego in the flesh and reborn in the glorious liberty of the children of God.'

**e. Christ Centered Leadership:** Christ centered leadership as liberating as it is; this doesn't just happen and you and I both know that. Even if we want to be, you and I will not wake up tomorrow morning having become a Mother Teresa, but with the Apostle Paul and with Malcolm Muggeridge, we can pray, Lord, what I do is not the good I want to do and the evil I do and not what I want to do, this is what I keep on doing. Who will rescue me? I am unable to pull it off Lord as least with any consistency. In those times when we are unable or unwilling to take up the towel; when we find ourselves in that place where this kind of leadership just doesn't make sense, it usually means that it's time to let the king wash our feet again. To let the king who loved his own to the full extent of his love wash us again. To let this king who knew where he had come from and where he was going, this king who knew that he was in the absolute center of his Father's will. This king, Jesus, whose heart is over flowing with love for you; it is time to let him wash our feet again. For the degree that you and I allow him to love us and to serve us; to that degree we can wash the feet of those we lead into the glorious liberties in the Kingdom of God. So lift up your gate you ancient doors, so that the King of Glory may come in; and who is the King of Glory? The Lord almighty, girded with a towel, he is the King of Glory.'

## 8. Chapter 8 – What is Culture? Products and Practices

**a. What is Culture:** We have been talking about what it means to be a Christ centered leader, laying the ground work on how to lead a Christ centered church culture. It is important to lead out with who we are, instead of leading out of something else; otherwise it is like building a castle on a cloud. It is important to get these things in place first. But now let's talk about what culture means; my background is in organizational culture. We will talk about the church being an organization because it is both an organism and an organization. Let's look at the components of organizational culture. What is Culture? What comes to our minds when we use that word? People from the audience answer: social norms; traditions and habits; shared values; structure; rules; both



written and unwritten rules and sometimes the unwritten rules are more powerful than the written ones. The lecturer continues: there are common preferences and expectations about how other people will act such as in a shared history or story. What other images come to your mind? One person said that it was the way we do stuff. This does explain it, doesn't it? There is a more sophisticated way of saying that but this does answer the question.

**b. So Is Culture Good or Bad?** Yes! It can unite us as a diverse group of people. There is a unifying factor potentially toward a common mission. What else is good about culture? It gives you a framework. Yes, and when we talk about culture, it can be a national culture, a church culture, a family culture or an ethnic culture or a college culture; it fits regardless and there are sub-cultures within cultures of course. These are general statements about culture; what else is good about any culture? When you are in your own culture, you feel comfortable by being understood by people around you. So, there is a comfort, a safety perhaps; most culture develops as a way of protection against an outside environment. There tends to be this sense of protection and comfort and predictability. There is also interpretation of events where someone else outside the culture may not interpret those events in the same way. Culture can define the people, such as this is who I am, this is my role; it can give you direction, purpose and a definition of who you are within the entity. So, it gives people a space and a place that has some sense of certainty to it. I think that a good culture can make people feel loyal to it and often inspire them to behave in a good way. So, there can be an inspiration toward raising the level of morality and motivation. Not all cultures are like that but it could be. People are on the same plain which helps them to potentially accomplish certain goals.

What is bad about culture? A culture can actually pull you down and if you want to be healthy within such a culture, you have to go against it. Cultures can become very exclusive; sometimes there is an unbreakable barrier and sometimes it can be veiled in sincerity. People become blinded within their culture unable to see outside and even accept other ideas even when they are good ones. Strong cultures can define boundaries so well that they reinforce negative stereotypes with bazaar behavior. So, there tends to be ethnocentrism; this superiority; my culture is better than your culture. Some people who live in places that we find even to conceive that they would see themselves in a superior culture. I used to work for an organization called Transworld Radio. As I watched Transworld Radio and its own culture and within the various regions of the world, there were subcultures of Transworld Radio. Whenever I would go to Africa, the attitude toward wine or alcoholic drinks was that you couldn't possibly be a Christian and drink alcohol. You had to be very careful working in that context. On the other hand, in Europe and working

there, they always served wine at lunch during the day. I wasn't so good at drinking it and I was very careful to limit myself. Even within a culture, there are sub-cultures that have very strong views. It was interesting watching the tug-of-war take place in those sub-cultures; one or the other felt very superior to the other. What else is potentially negative about culture? More mature cultures tend to resist change, even change for the better. So it contends to hold us back, to collectively restrain us from moving into more helpful places in our lives. It can be very exclusive and keep people on the outside that don't seem to fit. It can do great harm; a lot of killing has been done within religious cultures: in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions.

**c. Positive and Negative Aspects:** So, we know what culture is and we know that it is both good and bad; there are certain aspects of culture that are both negative and positive. But in this discussion, it is important to see those neutral perspectives because as I unpack and talk about the components of culture, we will recognize in these discussions that there are both positive and negative aspects of each one of these components that is within any culture. Sometimes when people talk about culture, they tend to talk about it positively or negatively. But from the beginning, what we are really dealing with is in regards to a neutral arena. Now let us look at organizational culture. We use the concept of an iceberg to talk about culture; because above the iceberg, up where you can see it, even in the night is what we call products and practices. In terms of the church, products can be whatever you offer to the environment that you are in, whether it is a ministry for helping people who don't have clothing, for example; this would be an example of a product. Or what you provide to your community on Sunday morning, for example. It is whatever the public sees, whatever the value adds to the environment. Any organization that needs to survive has to have a product that is ultimately of value. The fact is, organizations can go for a long time without having much value, but ultimately, they have to have some sort of product, some value that is added to the environment in order to survive within that environment. So, from an organizational point of view, as you think about the church, you think about the product that the church brings to society. Products include our relationship with the external world outside the culture. This is a business way of saying it. Practices on the other hand are those things that have to do with the ways we behave within the culture; the behavior of the members of a culture. So, when you think about practices, what are some of the practices that are prevalent within this church, looking at it as a culture?

**d. Products and Practices within Culture:** There is worship and prayer, small groups. When you go into church on Sunday, the practice is to face whoever is speaking. What would happen if someone would turn around and face the other way? There are unwritten practices; in

Transworld Radio, again, we had devotional time each morning at 8:00 am. There was never anything written about expectations to attend these devotionals. I was absent for a few days and I got a visit from the HR director asking where I had been and what was the problem. The issue was, there was an unwritten expectation about practice and every culture has those. Sometimes the unwritten practices are more powerful than the written ones. What are some of the other practices that are prevalent here in this church? During worship, you can move to the music, but not too much. So there are perimeters within that. So, if a person moves too much, they are out of place. What else is distinctive about this culture? There is a focus on children. If a person, not from this culture would walk in, these things can be seen. Whether products or practices, these are visible to whoever wants to take a look at them. But that doesn't mean that they can necessarily interpret all these practice, but they can observe them. They can see them with their own eyes. The longer that you are in a culture, sometimes those products and practices become invisible to you. The longer you are part of a culture; you don't notice some of these things that are going on. If you were to go to the Transworld International offices, the first thing that you would see is a large receptionist desk as you enter and on the wall behind the desk, is a huge Transworld Radio logo. I did a survey one time and I ask people who had been there for more than ten years if they could tell me what was on the wall behind the receptionist desk. Not one of them could tell me. When we are part of a culture, we can no longer see the ware in the carpet that a person walking in for the first time can see. I went to a funeral in church and sat down; it was an old church as the pews had all these carvings etched into them. I am sure that the people who sit in those pews for the last many years no long see those carvings. I'm talking about simple things but for anyone interesting into a new culture will see things that others who live in that culture can't see. A friend of mine recently attended our church and as we stood in the lobby, I ask him what he saw. He pointed out things that I hadn't seen in years.

## **Chapter 9 – What is Culture? Values and Assumptions**

**a. Values:** Let's talk about values and especially core beliefs. Values are things that we really do believe. These can include things like the Word of God, Prayer, Integrity, Fellowship, and Outreach as in our church and beside each of these values there is a Bible verse. This isn't what I'm really talking about here, but instead, I want to deal with the actual values. If you would ask any particular church what their values were; many would provide you with such a list as above. The reason why churches are so different is due to the values they really do embrace. And when we talk

about core beliefs, they are those beliefs that pervade every aspect of our community and collective life. If we say that worship is a value of the church and the only time you do worship is Sunday morning, worship may be a feature of your church, it isn't necessarily a value. If worship is truly a value, it tends to permeate every aspect of who you are and what you do and how you react and how you function. Every culture has both healthy values and some unhealthy values. The reality is that most churches have a set of stated values, whether written or not and then they have a set of real values. And there tends to be a gap between the stated values and the actual values. This word value is a neutral term and whenever we hear this word, we think positive but yet there can be a negative side of them and part of becoming healthy is the ability to close that gap between the stated and the real.

**b. Assumptions:** With the core of such a culture is what we refer to as assumptions. Some people call this a world view. The reason I don't use it is simply because in talking about world views, the argument is that my world view is right and your world view is wrong. We talk about assumptions because every culture has a set of assumptions. Those assumptions are in the form of mental constructs in our minds; they are in the form of pictures, in the form of images and those images define for us what we perceive as real. As the image that is deeply embedded in every culture is a perception, a mental construct of that which is real. This is also what separates one culture from another; while one culture perceives this mental construct as real, another culture doesn't share that same mental construct. This gets complicated when it comes to church and we will talk about some examples in regards to this. These assumptions are often at the very core of the culture, but we often function without even thinking about them because they are so foundational. It is like our homes; that which is most important is underground; yet, it is the part that we never see.

So our assumptions determine our values and our values determine our products and practices. But the problem is in most cases is when churches try to change their culture; they instead change the products and practices. If you are dealing with products and practices such as changing the structure of the board or the furniture; there is nothing wrong with changing these things. If we change these things but haven't addressed the core beliefs and particularly if we haven't addressed the assumptions that are driving those beliefs; when we experience problems we will refer back to those old products and practices because nothing has changed at the assumptions and values level. The reason we use the image of the iceberg; that which is underneath the water is what can sink us. So, it is critically important to understand these issues of assumptions and values. This also determines our practices and products that we have.

**c. Products and Practices:** Examples include missions planning and strategy. So, what is the core belief that is driving this practice? It is the preaching of the Gospel message that Jesus Christ came for the lost. So, we are convinced that people need the Gospel message. This is the core belief that is driving the practice and product. What is the mental construct that is driving that core belief? What is the image that is driving this? The image is heaven and hell; we have this image in our minds that there is a place to be with God and a place to be separated from God for eternity. This is a mental construct that this culture collectively shares that other cultures don't. This is what distinguishes culture. This mental construct is driving these values and in turn those values are driving the products and practices. A negative product can be where the pastor says that God told him that we need to build a new sanctuary, so let's get it done; and people don't say much. This is a practice, something that is happening from the pulpit. I'm sure that you have heard about these kinds of things happening. What is the core belief that is creating the arena within the culture for that practice to take place? There is a core belief that this pastor is somehow speaking for God or somehow has a special hearing from God. Yes, this is what allows this kind of thing to take place. There also has to be an accommodation for this. Underneath this as we think about the mental construct; what is it that creating the belief that is creating the practice? This person thinks that he or she has a special channel to God! This person is special. You may not see this as a positive thing but I can tell you that there are many churches who do think that this is positive. It is kind of like a Moses thing. So, he speaks to us for God; at least that is what is being portrayed here. We don't stop to think about these assumptions and values very often; we just see the products and practices. But we do need to stop in order to really evaluate what is happening within our culture.

We need to understand what is behind that practice. If it is healthy, then that's great; if it isn't so healthy, you need to ask the question, what is the core belief among us that is driving this and what is the mental construct, the image, the assumption that distinguishes this culture that's driving this? Should we question the products in order to stay healthy, a person asked? Well, I am trying to define the components of culture at the moment. Well, yes, there are healthy and unhealthy values in most every church. This is not a criticism of anyone's church, but instead, it is a reality of the situation. If we try to deal with this on the level of products and practices and they are secondary mechanisms of organizational culture. We will talk about primary embedding mechanisms. Every culture has both positive and negative products and practices. These are driven by values and then by assumptions of different views, especially the world view. This view is a

mental image of what is real and in order to address this, it is important to see what is behind these things. It is helpful to go through a process in regards to the church to determine what is healthy and unhealthy and why.

## **Chapter 10 – Metaphors for the Church**

**a. Organization:** Let's talk more about assumptions because it is important to understand what they are. If you see your church as a football team; your mental construct of your church is a football team. What would that communicate? What would you value and what would it look like? Well, you would value the quarterback as he is the highest paid person on the team usually. There would be people playing different positions. There would have to be an agreement on the play that you were going to run. So, what is the goal of a football team? It is to win against the opponent. There is even a win-lose within the team itself. What is the role of the coach? His role would include inspiration, training and encouragement. He doesn't actually play the game. A lot of leaders have an athletic view of their ministry. This mental image is going to create for us what we perceive as appropriate in terms of our view. It is not about whether it is right or wrong, but a mental construct that is affecting what we believe and how we function. If we change the image to a symphony then what would the characters be like? It would include harmony, blending and sound and performance. The goal isn't to win but it is of excellence. There is no competition in a symphony as such, especially during a performance. What is the role of the conductor in a symphony? It is to keep everybody in time mostly and also in balance with one another. So, if our mental construct of a church is a symphony as opposed to a football team, our image would change. How is a leader different in a jazz band compared to a symphony? The leader in a jazz band would play an instrument. So the person is a participant. What is the different in their functions?

**b. Machine Metaphor:** Your mental construct impacts how you perceive what you perceive as being real and appropriate. So, if I say the word, machine; what are the characteristics of a machine? Words like efficiency will apply to this word and also it is impersonal. There are no feelings attached to it; you just want it to work, however, it does require maintenance and tuning. The goal of a machine is productivity. Its purpose is to produce. When a person is talking about running a machine or being responsible for the machine, they are the operator; they keep it running and if a part goes bad, they replace it. There are characteristics of life in a machine, in that it works, but there is not inherent life as such. It has to have electricity or petrol or energy to keep it going. The reason why this mental construct is important is because the machine was the dominant

organizational metaphor of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. So that when people talked about organizational life, whether IBM or Ford or whatever they were talking about in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the dominant metaphor of all organizational studies was that of a machine. They talked about system's theory and span of control and people as human resources. It is all about machinery. In the 1960's and 70's the church fundamentally adopted that language and that mental image and it became the construct of what the church is. One such pastor described his church as a well-oiled machine. Even though we don't think about it, this creates our value system and also our products and practices. So, what are the characteristics of the machine within the church of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Well, the goal is productivity or fruitfulness. It is about the end game and that is to produce. It is to win souls, to build bigger churches; that is the end game.

What happens when a part of the body no longer works properly? There is conflict and thus it no longer works according to our way of thinking and the person gets sidelined with someone to replace the person in order to keep the machine running. This is dominant in terms of the model of the church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the generation that is following is resisting that machine metaphor, that machine assumption because they want to be valued as people instead of a machine metaphor. It is about the people, not about the production. They are reacting to this and that is why in so many places there is an exodus; people who have become exiled from the culture of the church, finding themselves outside the church as such because of this reaction to the assumption of that machine world view that so dominates church culture. People often become the machine and unfortunately we see this in the church as well. Unfortunately, there is little life in a machine and it eventually wears out. There has been a lot of conversation in recent years about how tired people are in the church because they have been functioning as a machine for so long. The machine metaphor is simply not working anymore. And so, in the end, we see that our assumptions do impact our beliefs and they impact how we function and behave.

**c. The Church as a Garden:** If we began to see the church as a garden, how would all this change? There would be a time of fruitfulness and idleness. There are seasons and cycles within a garden. It would take a lot of work and thus perhaps the goal of the gardener would not be productivity. The goal would instead be of tending and cultivating. Gardeners do care about how many tomatoes they get off their plants. They do care that the corn is healthy and grows properly, but they know that they can't control things that could destroy their garden. So the fundamental role of a gardener is cultivation, not production. That is a huge difference. What else is characteristic of a garden? There is inherent life within a garden and this is a powerful metaphor as opposed to a

machine. There is a bias toward survival in life; sometimes, if you leave a garden by itself, it will still grow. But a machine needs attention seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day. If there isn't enough gas and oil in a machine, it will either stop running or even blow up. But with a garden, there is a bias for survival and life within it. So, if we change our mental construct from a machine to a garden, how might it affect our belief system in the church? Personally, I believe that the garden metaphor is much more consistent with Biblical imagery than a machine. It is not efficiency but instead recognizing and respecting life and how life develops. Paul, himself, said that one planted and another watered, but God gives the increase. God is responsible for production; we are responsible for cultivation. This is a completely different imagery and mental construct of what the church is about. This requires a fundamental shift in our thinking and in the church. This needs to happen, now. We need to move from a mental model of a machine to a mental model of a garden. This is not against well-run businesses as such because there needs to be accountability in regards to certain elements within a business, but this is about the fundamental imagery of the church. It is about the mental imagery of our collective? This will affect what we believe about the church and affect how we practice church. I do want to repeat, every gardener that I know is concerned about the fruit that the garden produces. But, it is about how we go about getting those tomatoes and who is ultimately responsible for getting those tomatoes. It has to do with where we put our energy and our priority and how we frame our responsibility. This mental construct will affect what we believe about people and about our roles as leaders and our practices and products.

## **Chapter 11 – Machine vs Garden**

**a. Production vs Cultivation:** The role of the leader in a machine metaphor is production. The role of the gardener is cultivation and production of God's work. You can't scream at a seed and make it grow; you can't tighten down on a seed and cause it to flourish. There is a nurturing that is critical in a gardening motif that is so very important. But it isn't that they are not concerned about rice production, they are concerned that it produces rice. It is about what they perceive their role in this to be and it is to care for the rice, to care for the living entity and to do everything they can to ensure its growth, but ultimately it is God's responsibility to bring the results. Back in Genesis, it says that God formed man from the dust of the ground and gave him breath of life and the man became a living being. The Lord took the man and put him in the Garden to work it and take care of it. The King James Bible says to tend it. The church is a garden and our job is to work it and take care of it.



**b. Oiled and Cleaned vs Nourishment:** If that is true, let's compare the assumptions of a machine approach to leadership. The machine approach tends to view the collective called the church as individuals to be oiled and cleaned so they might function within that collective and the garden approach tends to view the collective as something that needs nourishment and watering as that they might grow. It is more individualistic growth which in turn contributes to the Kingdom of God. In the machine, according to James MacGregor in using the machine as a mental metaphor, people don't like work and try to avoid it. But for the garden metaphor, people view work as a natural part of their lives. People are not motivated in the machine culture; it constantly takes something from the outside to get it going whereas in the Garden approach, people are internally motivated to reach objectives in which they are committed. Thirdly people have to be coerced and threatened to get them to reach objectives. People avoid responsibility in the machine way of looking at things. They will seek and accept responsibility under favorable conditions; they lack energy to solve problems in the machine culture but they become innovative in solving problems in the garden culture. People depend upon the intelligence of the leader in the machine culture whereas in the garden culture, people are bright and will excel when trusted to do so.

Why is this important? It again comes back to how we view people is what we tend to believe about them and what we tend to believe about them is how we tend to treat them. These are assumptions that yield to values that yield to practice. Another issue in how we treat people is how they will tend to act. There is a self-fulfilling prophecy in this. If you treat people as a machine, they will tend to function as a machine; if you treat people as a garden in a garden motif, they will tend to function in a more positive and productive way. Now, these are forced categories; there is of course a continuum between these. I don't mean to say that if you treat everybody by the garden metaphor, they are going to excel. We are fallen people and we do tend to lean toward the Adamic nature. But as leaders, if we see people from that garden motif and view this as a living thing that is made in the image of God; these people that have been entrusted to us. Then it deeply impacts what we believe about them and it impacts in how we behave and how we function as leaders with them.

**c. Coffee vs Culture:** A person from the audience: does this creep back to the business world? My own CEO talks about meaningful work and tries to eliminate meaningless work in people's workday. Giving proper conditions, people will work hard and this gives meaning to what they are doing. It's interesting that the secular world sometimes and in some ways are ahead of the Christian world. One such CEO of a famous coffee chain says that they don't sell coffee, they sell a culture. It is really about these kinds of issues that are important to him. The way this CEO works,

frankly seems more Christian than some of our churches. Another such CEO, there is a deep humility in him. He works with people who are geniuses; there is humility there that is rising to a different level as in the way he treats people within his company. So, there are entities out there like that; sometimes there are lessons for us. Now their motive is often different, but none-the-less their way of going about doing what they do looks very good at times.

One person says: I was just thinking about some of the metaphors that the Scriptures use for the church as you have been using the metaphor of a garden to describe the better way to deal with people. We have a similar metaphor with Jesus and the grapevine with the branches; we can't produce fruit unless we take an active part in shaping those branches. Then there is the body metaphor with the different parts of the body. I think also of the marriage metaphor of the church with Christ being the bride and the church being the bridegroom. We have the good shepherd metaphor with Jesus being the good shepherd looking over the flock. There is also the temple with the living stones, where God dwells with Christ being the corner stone. They represent living things and not machine oriented. There is the metaphor of adoption also into the family.

So, I have basically submitted to you that the garden motif; the word garden isn't that important as such. The fact that it is a living thing with the role of the gardener or person responsible to lead in these contexts in cultivation and nurture and God is responsible for the fruit and production as opposed to the leader being responsible for production. Then the people or whatever it is to get the job done become cogs in the wheel. Those are two very different models with the machine model dominating so much of our thinking in both the secular world as well as the church in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is indeed changing somewhat because there is a pressure on the church to think differently; to think more organically about its role in the world. But there are some issues that we still face along this line.

**d. Attitude and Following Jesus:** If this is the case and if this motif of a garden is acceptable, then let's move up a notch. Once we have this mental image in place, then what kind of core beliefs and values will arise out of that set of assumptions? I want to submit two thoughts to you that may seem very simple on the surface. I would like for us to talk about these. One, Jesus taught that effective leadership has more to do with learning to following him than learning to command or supervise. That doesn't mean that commanding and supervising isn't important, it simply means that when we are following Christ then we will tend to lead well. There are lots of implications there. Secondly, effective leadership depends more on a right attitude than on mastery of certain skills. From the audience: I am convinced that leading a successful organization with a

person who is a control freak, then you will probably have a bad organization. But effective people allow others to do what they do best. If you are just keeping people in line through control, then they are not going to flourish; you are not going to see what they are capable of. So, one of the biggest things is just getting out of the way, letting people run and seeing what they can do. I think these statements reflect two Bible sections that we started last week from Hebrews 13 that effective leadership has more to do with following Jesus than learning to command. In Hebrews 13:7, it says to remember your leaders and consider the outcome of the way of their life and imitate their faith. If your leader is living that; that is a better person to follow, that reflects John 13 in washing a person's feet, Effective leadership depends more on the right attitude, one who is a servant leader. That is the attitude, not the mastery of some skill. It doesn't take a person to go to college to learn how to wash feet.

Can you consider this question, coming up with three points; how would the church in America be different if our leaders truly embraced these two statements? Good or bad? If we would be worst off then say that.

## **Chapter 12 – Discussion of Two Principles**

So the two questions posed include: how would the church in America be different if our leaders truly embraced the idea of changing their attitudes through trusting and following Jesus' example. These are seemingly simply principles from the life and teachings of Jesus. How would the church look different? How would our leadership be different? The first group: There would be less burnout in leadership. It would take the responsibility off one group as such. There would be more focus on discipleship building. There would be more emphasis on a sense of priesthood. You wouldn't have the responsibility all on one person; more people would share the responsibility. A person would more easily become connected to such a church, being able to get quickly involved in it as a person would feel that their involvement is valued and so fewer people would be dissatisfied and thus eventually leaving.

There are many churches, particular larger churches that have been developed almost on a consumer mentality. If this shift was made, the evidence would suggest a temporary dip or a lack of positive response at first. But, instead of just filling slots, there would be a general expression of gifts. I was pastor of a church where the treasurer really hated his job; instead he really wanted to be an elder. So eventually he became an elder and served in that capacity for twenty years. Every single person would be important, would be essential and there would be no hierarchy as such. People

would certainly have different functions and they would fill valued and important. The results would be greater than the sum of the individual people. The culture would be really different than what we are normally used to. One of the challenges that we face today is that we are dealing with a whole culture of people who have been damaged in the church and no longer attend church. So, it's got to be better than what they have experienced. We see that if the church was more Christ centered, people would not end up being as hurt. Everybody would be important and be part of the family; people would want what they see in the church; they would want what others have.

### **Chapter 13 – Leadership Values of Jesus**

**a. Leading by Example and not by Position:** We now approach the nexus of this course in terms of how we define Christ centered leadership and what it looks like and where the focus is. First: it is founded on relationships rather than control. There is a fundamental reality that to lead like Jesus requires the leader to enter into relationships with those they lead. There is no leadership without relationship in a Christ centered model. The idea of span of control is not a Christ centered concept, but a span of relationships is a Christ centered concept. A span of control is a management concept from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but a span of relationship is what Jesus was all about. So, the first fundamental premise, there must be relationship if it is going to be Christ centered leadership. Secondly, it is activated by influence rather than by position. Remember that Jesus held no earthly position; his only authority was from the Father. He was not a CEO of anything; in fact he had no place to even sleep. Those that followed him followed him because they chose to follow him. What we see in leadership today, often-times people lead out of position rather than by influence. I am sure that there are those that you have followed that didn't have a position. You could probably think of people in your life that you would have followed regardless of their position. Then there are others that you have followed only because they had the position. You can obviously see the difference between the two. The reality is if leaders have to depend on their position to get people to follow, then they have sacrificed the ability to influence. I learned earlier if I had to exert the full extent of my positional power, I had forfeited my capacity to influence the people that I lead. There becomes a disproportionate balance if we apply the position and the power that comes with it; we lose the capacity to influence.

**b. Leadership vs Management:** So, this says that leadership can happen from anywhere within the structure. Leaders that lead the people that follow them can be a Sunday school teacher that leads the elder. It can be a line person that leads the CEO in many respects, as it is really about

influence. It is not positional; management on the other hand is delegated authority. This is an important distinction; management is about delegated authority, you don't manage unless you have been delegated the authority position to manage. But leadership is a different function. It is fundamentally about influence rather than position. Jesus used influence exclusively with the people he led. Thirdly, and this may be what sets it apart, the focus of a Christ centered leader is on the follower's potential rather than productivity. This is a profound statement because this is what Jesus was about. Jesus could have chosen, based upon the people he influenced and dealt with, he could have had the largest mega-church in the history of human kind. He could have had a very successful ministry, but instead he risk it all on investing his life on a few followers who would become the agents to plant and develop the early church; that church which you and I are involved in after two thousand years. That was a huge risk to have put his energy, his priority and his focus on these twelve people, one of whom rebelled. But these twelve people and a few others; these are the people Jesus invested in and he was focused on their potential and out of that God did his work. If there is anything I can say to you, this is what distinguishes a Christ Centered leader. It is really about seeing a priority invested in those people that follow. If I do that well, God will take care of the fruit; God will take care of the productivity.

**c. Christ Centered Leadership is a Difficult Model:** This doesn't mean that I don't care about productivity? No, it doesn't, but it takes a huge risk to focus in on the potential of how I can help this person, these people that I'm leading to reach their highest Kingdom potential. And finally, it is committed to a common purpose, rather than a leader's agenda. That also says that it is not committed to the follower's purpose; it is committed to a common purpose. These four are to be taken as a package. If you separate any of them out, it becomes a crippled model of leadership. But taken together, it is a beautiful model of what Christ was all about and what he calls us to as Christ centered leaders in today's world. There is a hard love in committing to a person's potential. This isn't soft leadership necessarily; it is sometimes focused on hard love in order to help people move in the direction of their potential. This is not about a wishy washy kind of leadership; it takes enormous courage to lead this way. Think of the courage it took Jesus to focus on these twelve people when he could have done it himself and by the way, Jesus had no backup plan. There was no second chance; there was no, if this doesn't work, what then? This was the plan. It was focused on these people's potential that would carry it forward, those who would do greater works after he was gone. It is a powerful model.

From the Audience: One of the things we have been trying to do here at the church is to emphasize and grow the sense of team ministry. This is about relationships within the people on those teams. It is important that we have these models as the basis as they affect how a few teams work. Another Person: I keep thinking in regards to these four points; I work in a local law-enforcement agency that has moral issues and other challenges due to people being in positions rather than influence. Within this organization, if you do these four things, it would be very different. Then I think if we could do that in the church, this would create profound witnesses within the community. As people, we are designed for relationships and yet we tend to want to be in control and keep those same relationships at arm's length. Another person: I wish there was some research to apply this to schooling and how to deal with students in a learning situation. It seems to me that learning is also more about relationship than just a dictatorial atmosphere. A teacher usually wants to do their best for these students as you are definitely more engaged with them. Another person: within the current system, if you have one teacher with twenty-five students, you can't have that influence. The one rule school house had the concept of the older children would work with the younger children. So you were doing about one on three or four. But this would also be risky.

**d. We have Jesus as an Example:** I have shared this with CEO's around the world and I can't tell you how much push back that I get. I am delighted with this group, but the CEO's that hear this say that you can't possibly tell me that I'm not focused on productivity, but on follower potential. The reason they say that; frankly, when they show up at their board meetings, their boards are holding them responsible for production. This is also in the short term, the last quarter as such and not the potential in the next year or two years or more. So, you feel that tension, this is the tension. So, as we talk to leaders, this is a risk, a massive risk, but it is the risk that Jesus took. It is the risk to say that he would commit to put his time and energy and focus on developing the highest kingdom potential of those that he lead and through that, production will happen. The fruit will be born and this is exactly what happened. But it was a huge risk involved and there was no backup plan. From the audience: there is also a huge risk on relying on control in terms of production and leaders agenda. You can only look at cooperative America and see some of the companies that no longer exist; even recently an internet company is experiencing this having its fourth CEO in five years. So, it is not as if the left column is actually working in business; there are a lot of examples where it isn't. Another person: we assume that if we try to go to the relationship side, there would be chaos; a fear that it would fall apart. If no one is in charge, there wouldn't be any outcomes. This is the fear of many.

**e. This is a Package of Four:** So, this doesn't take away the role of function, but it does affect how we go about our approach to leadership. From the audience: Jesus took twelve and one washed out and he supernaturally stepped in and got Paul. So, maybe there was a backup plan! That is a good point. Another person: I think the fear of people who are in business; I think it is important for everyone to have that common purpose. When Tim and I worked together, I told him that I was committed to his highest kingdom potential, but I also recognized that I was ultimately responsible to answer to the board for this organization and that is how we function. But that is the risk of this. I think that it is the right direction for what we are trying to accomplish as we reflect the life and leadership of Jesus. From the audience: is it an either-or or is it a both-and? It is both-and because at the end of the day, I am responsible but as I focus I believe with all my heart that Tim and others on our team are reaching their highest kingdom and potential and then the productive will happen. However, that doesn't mean that I don't hold him to account on deadlines, etc. Those are realities in our ministry, but it is all about reaching the highest kingdom potential. Audience: Basically, what we are looking at is power through authoritarianism or power to influence. Some leaders have worked at those two things and they say that there is a third option which is called situational leadership. This is based on situations, the leader moves in one direction or another. Situational leadership which is also called consistency leadership and in certain contexts, there are certain appropriate approaches to this kind of leadership. In terms of the military, when you are getting shot at, there is no time for a consensus. If you don't get your head down, you are going to die.

We will deal with this within leading teams. This has to do with leading people based upon their needs and where they are in terms of maturity. This is a Tim Blanchard concept. All these are very true and they do take into account. But know that there are people who can be just as evil because they are leading by influence rather than position. You can see some of this over the history of the world that gained their power through influence, not by position. Adolf Hitler was one of them. He was able to rally people because of his capacity to influence before he ever had the positional power. Jim Jones is also an example; so this isn't about taking one of these and isolating it. We look at the package and recognize that it is about relationships, about influence; it's about follower potential and common purpose. When we see this as a package, then it begins to make sense.

## Chapter 14 – Discussion of Luke 5:1-11

**a. Luke 5:1-11:** as a way of getting into the discussion, I want to look at what has become a very special passage to me as I think about Jesus' leadership in this motif. It involves what we call the four pillars of a Christ centered leadership: about relationship, about influence, about follower potential and about common purpose.

Luke 5:1-11: One day as the crowd was pressing in on him to listen to God's word, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats lying on the shore, but the fishermen had stepped out of them and were washing their nets. So Jesus got into one of the boats (the one that belonged to Simon) and asked him to push out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and began to teach the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he told Simon, 'Push out into deep water, and lower your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, "Master, we have worked hard all night and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll lower the nets." After the men had done this, they caught so many fish that the nets began to tear. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats until the boats began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees and said, "Leave me, Lord! I am a sinful man!" because Simon and all the people who were with him were amazed at the number of fish they had caught, and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons and Simon's partners. Then Jesus told Simon, "Stop being afraid. From now on you will be catching people." So when they brought the boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

This is an incredible account of Jesus' calling of his first disciples. After he finished his teaching, Jesus said to Simon, go out from the shore where the deep water is and let your net down again. They had worked all night without catching very much. Time after time they had thrown their nets into the black dark water and held the ropes as their net sank. All night, they waited for a tug from the fish to signal them to haul in their net, but it didn't happen. There were still no fish by morning. So they had loaned their boat to Jesus for a teaching session as Simon was preparing to go home. He was tired because of fishing all night. Jesus engaged him to push out and let the net down one more time. If we could read between the lines, Simon may have thought what I would have thought, 'what do you think we have been doing all night?' We have let this net down dozens if not hundreds of time. My back aches, my hands are blistered; Rabbi, I see you mean well and you are a good preacher and I'm happy to loan you my boat for the sermon. Why do preachers think they



know everything; regardless of what Simon was thinking, he did as Jesus had ask. He could have told Jesus simply no because as fishermen, they knew how to fish; Jesus wasn't a fisherman. But Simon let the net down and the net was filled with fish. To lead people, leaders understand people's needs. They discover those needs by related to them. Jesus first demonstrated his concern for Simon the fisherman. Now when Simon recognized the power of Jesus who was in the boat with him, what did he do?

**b. Recognizing Holiness:** From the audience: Simon recognized holiness, righteous and perhaps even deity and realized that he was such a sinner that he had no right to be in such a person's presence. Maybe we should go into business together; Jesus and Simon incorporated; what do you think? That would have been my first reaction, but instead Peter immediately fell to his knees and said, 'Lord, go away from me for I am a sinful man.' Although Simon had an accurate view of himself, for this was a true statement; it could never have been such a true statement, particularly since he was face to face with the Son of the Almighty God. Jesus saw Simon, however, as a follower of great worth and priceless potential. And to enlist people in a vision, Jesus shows us that leaders see the potential in others and enable them to see the possibilities within themselves. So, he said to Simon, you are only going to catch fish; I am going to give you a dream beyond imagination; you are going to catch men and Jesus led him into a future. A person by the name of Max Dupree; he is one of my favourite leaders. He told a story of his granddaughter who was born with special challenges. One day, his granddaughter came to see him and said, 'grandpa, would you like to see me run?' She was about three years old at this time. Dupree said that his heart jumped; I thought to myself, this girl can hardly walk. How is she going to run? Like good grandparents, Dupree said, 'yes, I would like to see you run.' So, she walked over to one side of the room and started to run across the room, right across in front of his desk and directly into the side of the refrigerator. It knocked her on her back and there she lay on the floor with a big grin on her face. Dupree said to her, 'honey, you have got to learn to stop.' She looked up with a big smile, 'yeah, but grandpa, I'm learning to run.' This is human potential with a dream more than you or I can imagine, but that potential is also very fragile and in that moment, Simon was fragile as well.

**c. Be a Fisher of Men:** Some years ago, I was invited to speak in a very small church which I often do and I like doing that. The custom of that church was to have the speaker in the pastor's home for lunch after the service. We sat down at the table and I could tell that this lunch was different than the usual lunch. They had out special plates with the folded napkins, etc. I saw also that the three children were told to keep quiet and not do anything that would embarrass them

while the guest preacher was there. I remember particularly the older boy, he was a tall lanky kid and I remember him because he had cerebral palsy. After a bit of silence I said to him, ‘Allen, what subjects do you like in high school?’ With a smile, he replied, ‘algebra.’ For myself, I love algebra. Well, what do you want to do after you graduate from high school? With some hesitation, he responded, ‘someday, I would kind of like to be a math teacher.’ I continued, ‘so, where would you like to go to college?’ His father then interrupted and said, ‘Allen isn’t going to college. He is handicapped. He can’t go to college.’ I could see the hope drain away from that boy that very moment.’ What leaders really believe about people becomes evident. Jesus knew that ordinary people make great disciples and so he said to Simon, ‘don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.’

What a dream! You have been catching fish and now you will catch people and like all effective leaders, Jesus communicated with a familiar image that Simon understood vividly with his mind’s eye. He described what the results would look like, even before they started the project. So, when Jesus called Simon to fish for men, Luke recorded that they pulled up their boats and left everything and followed Jesus. Now, was it because Jesus had positional authority, positional power over them or was it because he was the big boss? No, he had no positional earthly authority at all. Effective leaders seldom command, they most often inspire. As inspired with Simon catching men, Jesus’ purpose became Simon’s purpose also. It says that Simon left. People purposely sacrifice when they have embraced the Kingdom of God. I find this to be an absolutely phenomenal story that captures these pillars in an amazing way. Not because these pillars are so critical, but because Jesus so demonstrated these things over and over again during his earthly ministry.

So what strikes you about this approach to leadership? A person from the audience: there are certain people that you trust and you are excited to be around; you want to follow them, not because of any particular authority they have over you. It is because of the relational clout that they have. This leadership approach is very other oriented, not self-oriented; not command and control which relates to the fragile nature of the human thinking. We forget this in any kind of management role.

**d. Know That You Have Potential:** I was sitting with a former colleague just a few weeks ago in a restaurant; we were just talking. He has been battling with some sickness and struggles in his career. I just stated to him, Steve, you need to get yourself well because there is a lot more that God has for you to do. He then began to cry uncontrollably, openly in front of everyone. He needed those words, that sense of hope, that sense of potential. He was in a very oppressive

environment and he isn't hearing those words of potential that reside within him. They were just simple words, yet they created a response that he was holding back. So, it is real among us.

## Chapter 15 – Primary Handles, Part I

**a. Primary Handles:** We have talked about assumptions and we have dealt with values. Where I would like to go at this point is to talk about primary handles for developing a healthy church culture. These handles originated from a researcher by the name of Eger Schdin who is found under educational culture and leadership; you will find that he is one of the premiere researchers in the field and has been for many years. He talks about primary embedding mechanisms of organizational culture. These are the mechanisms that whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, whether we want them to be or not are indeed the mechanisms that are by reality the way we deal with these handles. How the organization deals with these handles determine the direction of the culture and more specifically determines the value that become the real value within a culture. We often have a set of written values and a set of official values and what happens as we look and evaluate our culture from perspective of these primary handles, we will see what the real values of our cultures are. So these handles are both an evaluation tool as well as a tool for strategy.

**b. Leaders – What They Teach and Model:** The first handle that is critical, has to do with what our leaders teach and model. That may seem very intuitive to you. There was a survey done among two hundred and fifty thousand leaders some years back. It asked what the major things people were looking for in their leaders. Out of all the responses, the top three things people are looking for in leaders is 1) confidence; they want to be sure that these leaders know what they doing. Then there is 2) inspiration of others; they want leaders to inspire others to move beyond. But the number one thing people are looking for non-hypercritical leaders; the simply word is 3) honesty. This is the number one thing that people are looking for, honesty. The follow up question is how you can tell whether the leader is honest or not. It is not in what they say, but what they do. So, we are looking for demonstrated honesty, not just spoken honesty. We all know that if you are not modelling what you're teaching, then whatever your teaching is, it becomes suspect. There is a common understanding of that.

But it also says model and teach; sometimes if we are trying to address a culture in bringing a new emphasis within a culture or a new set of values in a culture, we could be doing somethings as leaders that could seem really weird and out of place. If we don't provide the interpretation of what

we are doing, then it can often be misinterpreted. Sometimes you will see Jesus with the disciples perform a miracle or do an action and he will turn to his disciples and ask whether they understand what he has done. John 13 is a primary example of this in when he washed their feet. This was something so outside of their culture where the master stooped to wash their feet. There needed to be some explanation that went along with that because it was so counter cultural to the way they functioned. So it is about what our leaders model and teach. Obviously you need to model what you teach, but leaders need to teach what they are modelling so that the two become seamless. But what I have often seen, leaders with good intentions come into organizations wanting to change the culture but don't spend enough time communicating what it is that they are trying to do and it can be misinterpreted. It ends up costing everyone. This is one of the five primary handles. If you look at what the leaders are modelling and teaching within the organization; this is a major clue of what the values are going to be within that organization and within that culture, regardless of what is written on the wall.

Audience: A good example of that was church this last Sunday where a powerful sermon was preached. The preacher that just finished up got back up to do the benediction; giving glory to God instead of taking the glory ourselves. That was a critical moment of knowing what to say. Another person: modelling and teaching require relationships. If you are modelling your behavior, you have to have a relationship with somebody who is observing it. To have demonstrated models or teachings, you have to have a relationship with people. If I have an audience of five hundred people, I can give them a wonderful message, but that is not a teaching.

**c. Allocation of Resources:** Okay, now the second handle; how we allocate our scarce resources. Every Christian organization that I know about, every religious organization that I know about, perceives that they have scarce resources. We would like to have more resources as I would imagine that this church would like to have more resources. I know that our organization would love to have more resources than we have. The only religious organization that I know of that feel they have enough is the Vatican. I was in India recently talking to the director of a major Christian organization. It was interesting to hear from their perception of how poor they were and their need of funding. So, we all perceive that we have these scarce resources, but how we deal with those scarce resources; whether we like it or not or whether we want that to be or not; whether we preach something altogether different. The reality is in how we deal with those scarce resources, this communicates volumes to people. I have been involved in a number of organizations that have talked about the values for people and to develop people. But when it comes to the year-end budget

cuts, sometimes the first thing that gets cut is the cost of developing people or the retreats or whatever. Sometimes, this is what is required, but when we do cut those resources, it communicates what the organization truly values. It is not just about money; it can be about personnel or equipment or space. It can be about time allotment; it can be about a lot of different things. Whatever we consider to be resources, they are particularly scarce; those things that aren't set, those things that we have to scramble for. How we take, as leaders and then allocate those resources makes all the difference in the world in terms of what our culture perceives as a true value.

Audience: it can go back to the creeds; a leader can say that this thing is really important to us but you don't allocate any funds for it. Another person: it also depends on how you define resources; my resources are my tools. If my belief is that my people are my resource, then that is where I am going to put all my limited resources.

So, resources are more than just money; it is a lot of different things. What are some ways that Jesus used his resources? He had time, this is a critical resource. He wasn't choosy as to whom he spent his time with. He accepted all people and chose to spend his time with people, not just preaching and teaching. Jesus went to the very bottom as far as people were concerned. Jesus prioritized his time with his father and with his disciples, the twelve. He could have done so many other things as people were pulling at him to do healing; he didn't heal everybody, did he? He was an equal opportunity Savior. The reality is, he spend a great deal of time with his disciples, particularly as he drew closer and closer to the cross. Audience: if I were to try and bring about major changes, I would do two things: I would leave a great impression, a lot of miracles and I would go to the top of the hierarchy, but Jesus did the opposite. Jesus didn't have limited resources; he had all power, all wealth at his disposal. He had available to him legions of angels, but he rarely used any of that. He limited himself; he sat all of that aside. He raised people from the dead, so he did use some of his power. So, he limited himself in the resources he accessed; perhaps part of that was to teach what he really did value. If he had limitless resources, it would have been difficult to really see what was really important. Jesus chose not to have a lot to do with money as such. Through this, he was showing us what true value was. In paying tax and the money from the mouth of the fish; Jesus demonstrated that this wasn't a big deal.

**d. Behaviors we Reward:** The third primary handle has to do with the behaviors we reward. What behavior in the church do we truly reward and what behaviors do we penalize? In many churches, there is the statement oftentimes that we champion integrity, for example, the spiritual disciples. But in churches that I know about and also Christian organizations that I have

been part of, more often than not, the people that are rewarded are the people who have access to resources and know how to work the political system. Whatever we reward, whatever behavior we truly reward and whatever behavior we penalize will drive the values within the culture, regardless of what we preach or what we have officially written. We unintentionally reward behaviors that we don't mean to. The sad part is, whether we intend to communicate or not, we still communicate. I was with a CEO of a large Christian organization one time and he was being blasted and criticized within the organization because of an action he took. He told me that he didn't mean for it to be interpreted that way, but it didn't matter what he intended because the people could only observe that person's behavior. It is the rare person that will ever come to that type of person at that level and ask what they actually intended. It is the behavior that is observed. And whether we intended it or not, whether we like it or not, whether we even want it to be that way or not; the behaviors that we reward and the behaviors that we penalize drives the values deeply within any culture and reality.

Audience: if I reward some behaviors, especially when a person is successful; my assumption is that success is what God wants; financial success or worldly success. That worldly success can help God's kingdom.

**e. Addressing Assumptions:** It is so difficult for us to actually address assumptions. The best that I can hope to do with this course is to address the value level and hope that we can deal with some of those assumptions and begin to ask what is really going on. These are addressing the value's level and as we look at these, these are not prescriptive, they are descriptive. Whatever we do with these is going to determine the culture of the organization. That is the descriptive part. So, how do we reward people in the church? What are some of our reward systems? When I was growing up and attending Sunday school, we would often get a star for attending for a year. Beyond that, what are some of the reward systems that are useful? Sometimes, it is what we highlight in our general gathering. When I was vice-president of spiritual formations at college, my responsibility was chapel. When I got there, they were doing all kinds of things during the chapel service that weren't chapel. I said to them, this is what chapel is and this is what chapel isn't. Can you imagine the push back that I got? It seemed like a simple statement, but it was because we were going to reward somethings in chapel and highlight some issues and not highlight others. This is true in the church; whatever is in that place where we all come and gather, whatever gets attention in that moment typically becomes a more highly valued issue. Audience: we reward certain activities or efforts. So, this is the attention by leadership to the people. It is where leaders apply their energy and attention.

It comes back to resources; it is where we spend our resources. It is time, it is money and personnel; it is all of that, the values of what we live. The things that people care about are rewarded. We also reward people based on promotion. They may start as an usher and eventually they end up as an elder in the church. These are ways that we reward people; who we reward and what basis we reward has to do with the organization way of hiring, firing, promoting and retiring people. That can be in a volunteer organization or an employee based organization. This will tell you a lot about the standards that are used in this will tell you a lot about what the organization values.

## **Chapter 16 – Primary Handles, Part II**

**a. What we Measure:** The fourth area is what we measure. This is descriptive and what it basically says is what we objectively observe is what becomes important to us. If you don't want something to be important or to be valued, just stop measuring it. In my church in the bulletin are two pieces of information: the number of people present in the previous service and how much money came in. It is easy to measure those things, but that is what becomes important in terms of the church. It is not that those things are unimportant, but if we want other things to be important and valued, we need to find a way to observe them whether or not they are happening. We need to give an objective criterion whether it is actually taking place. Take for example integrity again, when we talk about integrity, we want integrity to be part of the church; we want spiritual maturity to be part of the church. These things are difficult to measure by any standard, but if we have figured out a way to objectively observe whether those things are happening or not, then we run the risk of defaulting to those things that we do measure when we are under pressure. That is the key point; and so you don't have to measure it but neither should you expect it to hold up under pressure. As an example: I went to work for Transworld radio in November of 2000. At that point the organization was looking for leaders. In fact they had gone through a process of selecting their next CEO and because the choices were so limited from within the organization, the first mandate that the board gave the new president was to initiate a leadership development program within global Transworld Radio. I was the first person that the president elect hired to do that. In taking the job, I started to ask questions and got very few answers.

One of the key executives in Europe had heard a talk and wanted to start using the term servant leadership. So, what do we mean by this and I spent over a year working with people all over the world to identify its definition. We came up with seven key elements challenging the process and developing a shared vision. We developed a grid for understanding what this term

meant. But we weren't sure if that was what we needed; we now had a definition and perhaps people would now want to be this kind of leader. It didn't happen. So, we were about two years into this process and still wondering what to do as I was still thinking about the phrase, 'we are what we measure' and 'measure determines values.' If you want it to be important you must have a way to objectively observe it. So, we began putting together a survey that was made up of forty-two statements. It took these seven elements we had developed for being a servant leader; I would call it a Christ centered leader today. So there were six statements and we began to unpack each of these seven elements. The statement was simply made and there was a scale from one to ten to use as a measurement. It wasn't perfect as such but it was constantly improved on over the years. So, we begin to use this and eventually worked out a process where all of the leaders started to go through a process. Even though it was voluntary, it began to be used more and more. It was a multi-rater analysis tool of a 360 degree process where the leader that took it on with three or four others that would assess the leader. We would then unpack the results and explain it. When we objectified what it meant to be a servant-leader, one of the issues had to do with developing character. If you are going to develop character, you must be a person of character. What we begin to see in using this tool was the emphasis of the importance of servant leadership; this began to rise in the organization.

Today in Trans-World Radio, servant leadership is alive and well within that organization. The culture has shifted and it wasn't just because of the measurement; there were other things that were going on as well. The fact that we figured out a way to measure whether or not it was actually happening raised the level of leadership. What we discovered in the research of leadership development was developing ways of measuring is an actual leadership development tool in and of itself. The process of measuring is very vital and particularly when we are under pressure.

Audience: Anything that you want to improve, just start paying attention to it and it will begin to be noticed. If our priority is to reach a certain goal with those who don't know Christ, we need to have some sort of measurement to say that we are accomplishing it. If we are a culturally diverse congregation and yet all we see every week is a mono-culture; are we succeeding? How we measure what we say must be clear. Sometimes we get squeamish measuring things in church because it could be manipulated somehow. Are we cheating the system to bring up our numbers? Are we shallow because we start ticking off boxes? But we know our motivation as sinners! We admit that we don't want to be a business model, there is still that lean sometimes. It would be interesting if we had a bulletin sometimes stating certain specifics about what the church is doing. What we measure ties in to what we reward or punish.



The interesting part of this conversation, it is interesting what the church is comfortable with measuring and what we are not comfortable with measuring. It is what we have become comfortable with measuring. This is simply descriptive in that what you measure is what you value. Be aware that this is all very interrelated. Audience: We need to share what we are measuring; I may be measuring how many people are coming to youth group this week and you may be measuring how many pastors come to the Sunday school class this week. We are all measuring things and the challenge for a church is in measuring different things and that in itself becomes a competition because we don't have shared understanding. There becomes competing stakeholders and this can become confusing. The role of leadership is to create those kinds of parameters in order for us to work together. A tendency that we have is to focus on things like numbers. Roses were given out to those who made decisions in the church and then the focus became the number of roses that were given out. When I was working in Spiritual Formation in college, people really had a hard time in the area of measuring spiritual development. It is one of those scared areas that for some are off limits. We are charged with being pharisaical when we consider these categories. But the simple principle is, if you don't measure it, you can assume that the things that are measured will take precedence within the culture. Audience; the word measuring implies statistical measuring; objectively observing it. You may not be able to put numerical values on it, but you need to account for it somehow.

So, it is not always quantifiable, but there has to be a way to objectively observe whether it is happening. This is a tool; it is not a means to an end. For example, even though you state that there is an objective to memorize a hundred verses, the importance is memorization not necessarily a hundred verses. Shane calls this an embedding mechanism. The primary embedding mechanism of organizational culture; we call it a handle. Audience: one of the constructs that has been helpful to me is to recognize that there are process measures and outcome measures. Most people default to the process measures because they are easier to measure. Like, how many things that are done. How many classes have you attended? How many people have you shared the Gospel with? These are good but a difficult one is how to measure outcomes. You can count the number of people in class, but it is difficult to count the number of people that understand or who have changed. Difficult churches can be seen to have different measurements. Sometimes, just paying attention to a certain thing will help to move toward a scale of measurement. The fact that you begin to measure it, it mysteriously begins to take a higher level of precedence within the collective.

**b. Response to Crises:** Let me share the fifth handle and then I will share how Jesus dealt with these points. So, the fifth handle is how our leaders respond to crises. Leaders can carry on for some time when waters are smooth and when things are going well. So, the organization just carries along by itself. But when a crisis comes, whether it is personal or whether it is with personnel or financial. This is when everyone's radar goes way up and they begin watching the moves the leader makes. In those moments, whatever happens in how they respond in a crisis moment drives the value deeply. This embeds the values deeply within the church culture. If you think about how the leaders in the church that you are involved with that have responded in critical moments and then think how those are reflected in the values that people actually value in church, you will see the connection. Some of these things don't leave us feeling very settled; they leave me feeling unsettled as I think about my own leadership in the culture we are attempting to build in our ministry. We get focused on a lot of other things, but these are critical as the primary role of a leader is the creation and nurture and the monitoring of culture. We talked about primary embedding mechanisms; these are primary handles; there are secondary ones which include structure, symbols such as you logo and how you create your worship space. There is church structure is a secondary element, even how we arrange the furniture, etc. The problem sometimes is that the church gets those secondary issues in the place of the primary ones. In the best of cases, the secondary ones roll out from the primary ones. Some Christian organizations change their structure every year in order to change the culture. The reality is that they are only rearranging the chairs. It feels good at first, but then it collapses back into itself because the proper issues haven't been addressed.

As we begin to drill into these five handles and as you think about your own church culture, you will not have to tell somebody that's acquainted with these five handles how your church is doing. If they are to walk into a church at any time, they wouldn't have to be told what the values are. The answers to these five questions, the responses will be easily seen. That can be good news or not such good news. Audience: how can you do some of these things when you are not in a position to do anything about it? Lecturer: There are always struggles in not being in a position of making decisions about these issues; I am limited in terms of how much I can affect the outcome of this. As we have talked a lot with younger leaders that are in traditional organizations, this has been one of the struggles. All of us, in order to be Christ centered leaders, in addressing these, in a sense become a buffer between the people that tend to be above us in positions of leadership and those that we have been given responsibility to lead. That is really what it is to be a Christ centered leader. As you think about how Christ led, he was the buffer in many respects between those that held the

authority and the power and those that needed God. As he became that buffer, it took him to the cross. In every case, if we are willing to exercise our role, that buffer role of Christ centered leaders, by God's grace we are going to lead this way with the people that God has given us responsible over to influence and have leadership with, regardless of what the people higher up may do. I believe that often times we have a lot more capacity to address these things that we may think.

## **Chapter 17 – The Example of Jesus**

**a. How did Jesus deal with These Handles?** We have talked about these five handles as being descriptive. Whatever you do about these five will determine the value of the organization in the church. So, how did Jesus deal with these handles? Jesus was preparing the twelve to establish the church. That was one of his primary roles; besides giving his life for our sins, it was also to build his church; for he said, 'I will build my church.' So, for the twelve, his focus was to prepare them for the start of the church shortly after his resurrection and ascension. If these disciples were watching his every move and listening to his teaching, then what values was he incorporating and instilling in their lives during those years that would prepare them to perpetuate that kind of culture in the church. It seems so obvious if you look at the Gospel, that the twelve went on to be the fathers of the church that we are part of today. So, whatever Jesus did in preparing them and laying the ground work, establishing the values that would become part of the early church was incredibly powerful. Let us look at some examples.

**b. The Demon Processed Man:** Remember the story of the demon processed man, the person that was running around among the tombs. They would chain him up and he would break those chains and run through the village like a wild man. He was a wild man because he was processed and then Jesus showed up. Jesus, of course, delivered the man. The reaction of the people of the town, Luke says that they were filled with fear. That was the first statement. They should have been afraid of the man in the tombs. We are sometimes less afraid of such things than we are of the power and wonder of God. They ask Jesus to leave. After the demons left the man, they went into the pigs. So, what did Jesus model and teach to his disciples here? Audience: people are more important than pigs. Speaker: The man wanted to follow Jesus, but Jesus told him to go back to his own people. The man obeyed him and returned to his people. It wasn't about amassing a following of people; it was about empowering people to go forward. Imagine the disciples watching this; this was over among the gentiles, among a Godless people and also a demon processed man. Can you imagine the value Jesus placed on one person within that context? This

man was a total outcast. Audience: we sometimes want to control everything that seems somewhat out of control.

**c. Clearing the Temple:** What about Jesus in clearing the temple? There were money exchangers so that people could buy animals for sacrifice and they were cheating people in exchanging their money. This was all being done within the temple area. So, Jesus overturned tables and threw their money about and disrupted the whole scene. What would the disciples think about this situation? Audience: I would wonder why Jesus didn't talk to someone in charge, rather than react the way he did in demonstrating anger. Speaker: Rather than take a political approach, he actually took a prophetic approach. In taking a political approach, it could have taken time in regards to debates and questions and convincing the right people what they should do. But Jesus had the insight to see things that we couldn't see or understand. There was a strong value on what belonged to God. This wasn't political, but instead, it was a demonstration of God's heart for that which belonged to him. He was protesting the fact that it changed the temple from being a house of prayer to being a marketplace. He was really jealous for God's property, not the building but instead, the temple concept.

**d. Washing Jesus' Feet with Perfume:** As we look at how we allocate scarce resources, we talked about how Jesus gave his time because that was a precious commodity that he had. When Jesus' feet was anointed with perfume and there was a response to that text in Luke; what was Jesus teaching about a scarce use of resources? This was the story of a sinful woman who came and washed his feet with her hair and anointed his feet with costly perfume. We saw a backlash from religious leaders. One of the things was perhaps she could see him as the Son of God because she recognized the sin within her. They could not see him as the Son of God because they didn't recognize their own sin within them. So, the cost was irrelevant; what she did was an expression of her love and feelings of forgiveness from the Son of God. Perhaps, Jesus paid this compliment in terms of rewarding someone who values him. The people about him didn't value him, but this woman did. His focus is on her heart and her faith with her actions which were contrasted with those around him. Her heart was more focused on Jesus, perhaps as her Savior. It was a lavish giving out of extreme gratitude. Paul taught this in Corinthians.

In behaviors we reward; we could spend a lot of time here. We could go through the Scriptures to see what was Jesus teaching; what values was he instilling within these disciples? What are the behaviors that Jesus wants to highlight for the peacemakers, the poor in Spirit and the meek? And those who are persecuted for righteousness sake; these kinds of things clearly are the things

that Jesus wanted to champion. How did this impact the early church? Interestingly, with Jesus and the parable of the sower didn't demonstrate proper farming methods; the seed landed in places where it can't possible grow but some of it landed in places that it did. This is about God bringing about the fruit. We could go through these kingdom parables; if the farmer didn't know about sowing seed or weeding, it was no way of farming.

**e. The Parable of the Mina:** The parable of the mina in Luke chapter 19 was dealing with a very clear scenario; when the king went away to receive the kingdom, he left these servants, each with a mina to put it into a business and make a profit and when the king returned, he rewarded people according to what they had done with what they had been given. Each was given the same amount. It isn't about how much you have, but it is about what you do with what you have. There is a measurement that is clear, but the emphasis is on responsibility with what I have been entrusted. This is the key point within the text. As we think about these handles, think about how Jesus in cooperated these handles to teach and train and prepare his disciples for the church that they would be responsible for. One fascinating study is on how Jesus responded to crisis. One of my favorite stories is John chapter 6 when it was presumed that Jesus would be king. He feed the thousands with the fish and the bread and then they followed him to the other side of the lake because they wanted free food forever, thus they wanted him to be king. They wanted Jesus to provide them with food forever. But, Jesus offended them in describing what it was going to cost them to follow him of which then they soon left him. In a crisis moment when Jesus could have become the political leader, he chose to follow the Father's way and to reduce his influence over the masses. That response in crisis is critical for us to see what he valued. As we place that against the 'bigger is better motif' that we have discussed, it can be very instructive to our lives and our leadership.

**f. The Woman Caught in Adultery:** Of course, the woman caught in adultery; let's talk about that. We know the story, Jesus writes on the ground, let him who is without sin cast the first stone. In that moment of crises, what is Jesus teaching? What value is he instilling within those who are watching this? Perhaps a huge amount of mercy and forgiveness; they need to take a personal inventory of their own lives. Was this a critical moment? Yes, it was life and death. It was for the woman and for Jesus; what is he going to do and how was he to respond to this?

## Chapter 18 – Church Values Analysis

As we think about these five handles, what I would like to suggest in working with a group; there is a handout showing you a way to work through your current church values. This helps you to analyze what your current values are. As we have mentioned, those values will determine the products and practices and how your church culture looks. The simple questions are laid out; what do our leaders model and teach? As you think through this, you simply answer those questions. And then how do we allocate our scarce resources. It is a simply question to ask but perhaps not to answer. What behaviors do we reward, what do we measure and how do our leaders respond to crisis. As you work through the answer to these questions. I would encourage an exercise to do that with the church leaders. As you work through those, you will begin to see as you answer these as a collective what values begin to emerge. What are the real values and you simply list those. You may find that they differ from those that are officially talked about. But the first step in using these handles is to analyze to determine what those values are.

It is a simple process but it takes time to work through. In groups that I have worked with, we have spent as much as two days on this process. It isn't a small task but it is something that is hugely important to the local church. Once you have determined those actual values, then these five handles can become a strategy matrix. So, what do you wish for your church to value? You have what your church actually values, now what do you wish for your church to actually value. As you work through this, you simply fill in the blanks for the first value. Let's say you want to value evangelism; people coming to church with lives being transformed by the power of Christ. The first question then is what will the leaders model and teach? How will they go about modeling and teaching that? Secondly, how are we going to allocate our scarce resources if we want that to be a value of our church? One such church said that they wanted to value prayer. In that, we worked through what behaviors we will reward and what will we measure? So, we become very specific about those as our values become part of our strategy. You will notice that in the analysis there are five handles and in the strategies there are four. We dropped the strategy of crisis because crisis just happens and you have to be prepared for it but you can't plan. So, you determine what your values are that you want and I would suggest for any church, if you have more than five or six values that is too many. Think about the core of who you really are and what you are about and focus on those. If you work through this process faithfully; the first step is analysis and then determine where you want to go and what kind of a culture you want to reflect and then begin to apply these primary

handles in that process. What will our leaders model and teach? How will we allocate scarce resources? What behaviors will we reward and what are we going to measure going forward.