

Section 4

Biblical Leadership Committed, or How Pastors Lead

Motivation: Strategists, Salesmen, or Servants?

Suppose, for the moment, that we are the unseen, but invited, guests in the home of a landowner—a landlord—in the land of COT. We have a husband and wife, and three children. The landlord's job, outside his family responsibilities, is the management of his family farm. The crop is wheat, and the competition—hence, pressure—is stiff.

As we observe the months and years of this families life, we notice a growing conflict—no, actually, it becomes *the* conflict that threatens the quality of life for each member of the family. It is the conflict of task verses relationship; work verses worth; the economic realities of survival verses the individual realities of the needs of each person in the family.

How do we notice this conflict? The father as leader, manager, employer, and lord faces daily decisions. These decisions result in crops grown or lost, bills paid or due, and serfs satisfied or dissatisfied. In the shuffle of time—and the growing success of this farm—the family progressively suffers. Actually, they don't suffer in basic necessities—food and shelter—but they, progressively, see less of their husband and father, and find that communication, and personal development of relationships, begin to wither. Ironically,

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the wheat as a food crop grows strong while the individual relationships as a family-crop grows weaker.

Countless times we, as silent and unseen visitors, have wanted to say something to the father. But we suspect he would answer us the way he answers his wife and children when similar questions are raised. Issues of the realities of the business world, the pressures of managing a *multi-natural* organization, and management-labor problems on the farm are given as reasons why this man's priorities are as they are. The wife is seen as the management assistant, who handles the financial books as well as certain employee complaints on the farm. The three children are given greater and greater work responsibilities—which allows for greater farming and financial efficiency. And the years roll on—seemingly successful—until you look again at the deteriorating family relationships.

Back to the twentieth century. What is the point of that Middle Ages excursion? Just this: as you imagined the life of this family, and the growth of this farm, you should have been aware of a growing conflict. It was not a conflict, but *the* conflict that, in the deepest sense, measured the *real* success of this family. It had little to do with finances or farming. It had little to do with possessions or position or prosperity—ugly sisters to the queen-mother power. It had to do with family, and love relationships. It had to do with acceptance, and with appreciation. It had to do with personal development, and life-mission—with relational intimacy.

CHURCH LEADERS AS STRATEGISTS

Our medieval model is not that far removed from the twentieth century realities, and conflicts, associated with the Church being, and doing, the intention of the Master. The tension is the same: given the resources of the church: money, possessions, relationships, and time—what is the best way to accomplish the proper goals?

Goals is a key word in this discussion. Admittedly, the resources, or means, are human. They are the volunteers who, under

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the conviction of the Holy Spirit, believe in God, are made part of the sacred Body, and choose to become a regular part of a church—of a family of believers. Under the ultimate goal of glorifying God, the ecclesiological goal is the growth and maturity of the saints in a way that fulfills the mandate:

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ (Col 1:28).

In other words, the Church's product is people, and the *way* we relate to these people, called brothers and sisters, is the *real* measure of success for the Church. The standard is perfection, or maturity.

Now, to a point, everyone would agree. Certainly, people are the real concern of every church. But—and here's the rub—*how we use verses build these saints is the critical measurement of the quality and success of any assembly.*

People-users verses people-builders. This conflict sums up not only the management and motivation issues for the Church, but for the historic development of industrial development as well. For example, in the early part of our century, the concern of management theory was efficiency. Frederick W. Taylor did a noted scientific analysis on the art of shoveling!¹

Further, in the 1920's and 1930's, the personal needs of workers—their hopes, fears, and aspirations—began to be discussed. Christian employers began to ask questions about the morality of management—not just the efficiency of the task. By the mid 1950's an almost-by-nature conflict was identified: industry, with its intrinsic needs for efficiency and profit, will conflict consistently with the personal and individual needs of the worker or employee. Hence, the conflict: tasks verses people, or in terms of the product of the industry—people-users verses people-builders.

Two recent management theorists round out our quick survey of this issues before we apply these observations to the Church. The

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first will be noted here, and the second in the following section of this chapter. First, the well-known work of Abraham Maslow, in his *A Dynamic Theory of Human Motivation*, observed that there is a basic hierarchy of human needs. These begin first with basic or fundamental needs for food and shelter, and move next to security needs for safety, or freedom from pain and worry. After needs in these two areas are met, issues of social relationships—sense of belonging, or love and acceptance, self-esteem—prestige, status, or appreciation, and finally, self-fulfillment—responsibility, creativity, achievement, and growth, are in-order levels of social movement or psychological desires for any individual. If a person is hungry, he will not progress to higher goals until he is fed. Conversely, if he is fed, and secure, then the matters of love and relationships become his concern.

Now, if our job as a Church was to feed the hungry, or house the homeless, then this would have no bearing on us. But if people are motivated by their needs, and perceptions of needs—even spiritually—then we are responsible to provide an environment, and leadership-believer relationships, that best provide for the needs of the individual saint, as well as the model of “admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

To sum up, since the early 1900’s management theorists, and American industry, have increasingly realized that there is more to life than the job. Even from the pragmatic analysis of one concerned with profit margins, happier employees make for more efficient productivity. Quality in—quantity out.

Now, back to the issue of church leaders as strategists. Motivation is internal, not external. Church leaders are to be the catalysts for providing the relationships, and contexts, where the full range of needs of the saints can be met.

But motivational leaders can turn a situation or ministry for the bad as well as the good. How might this happen? All too often it happens when believers in the assembly are seen as means toward

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physical ends more than, most of all, spiritual means and ends in themselves. It is very easy to give a passing glance, or lip service, to the primary spiritual objectives of the New Testament, and then move quickly to matters of nickels, numbers and noise. That is, rather than *honestly* asking how the total numbers of an assembly impact the issue of relationships—especially in the sense of loving God more, and loving others similarly—we talk of multiple services on Sunday morning, or building programs, or broadening the numerical base of our constituency.

What are we saying by that? We believe we are saying numbers and nickels are more important than loving God, and loving others. And, before you reject that out-of-hand, we would add that the Church must admit that it cannot do both. It cannot be both a ranch and a flock—it cannot raise sheep like cattle. At least, it cannot do it well—from the model of the New Testament.

The reason this is true is because of the nature of relationships—with God, and with others. *The essential characteristic of intimacy is knowing, and being known.* It was true for our medieval family—as relationships were sacrificed on the altar of agricultural enterprise. And it should be true for the Church. It must be true for undershepherd and sheep relationships—before relationships are sacrificed on the altar of ministry enterprise.

In this latter concern, leaders can be strategists in a good sense. Their management responsibilities should focus on that which builds the saint, the family, and assembly-relationships—both with God, and with believers in the assembly, and ultimately, unbelievers outside the assembly (whether locally, or overseas). The church as an organization is never an end in itself. It only is as *Christian* as its leaders, and believers who belong.

For example, consider youth ministry. Some leaders will say, “If you don’t have a dynamic program for high schoolers, then you will lose families!” Certainly, this has, at times, proven true. But what is the goal of youth ministry? It seems it is part of a larger issue of nuclear family relationships, and of extended family relation-

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ships. It is not simply to entertain teens. Nor is it simply to provide the brightest, flashiest, talk-of-the-town programs. It is to provide both peer group relationships, and contexts for developing family relationships, that provides for the maturity and spiritual growth necessary to live wisely as teenagers in our day. And, ultimately, it is to provide a living witness and witness that touches the lives of unbelieving teenagers. Is that done better with a youth group of 200 instead of 20? Probably not—in our judgment. But, almost without discussion, success in youth ministry is defined in terms of numbers...and noise.

So it is with the church. Almost without discussion, we tip our hat to the physically or numerically successful assembly, and we *assume* this is the measure of what the Church is to be. No wonder one well-known California electric-church-preacher boasted that his glass structure would inform the surrounding community, as they drove past, that God was active in their midst! A building says nothing of that sort at all—unless you are talking about buildings of flesh and blood, and talking about loving God with all of your heart, soul, and mind, and loving your neighbors—believers and unbelievers—by meeting needs that are seen, and can be met, and ultimately—by word and deed—representing the true Kingdom.

CHURCH LEADERS AS SALESMEN

Just as Christian leaders can be strategists in a bad or good sense, so they can be *salesmen* in similar wrong or right ways. It all depends on what and how they work.

Initially, let's deal with our second theory of management. This second theory, from the perspective of the role of the manager as much as the needs of the employee, comes from Douglas McGregor's book *The Human Side of Enterprise*. In it, he identifies two contrasting management styles: the first is from the traditional model. In this model, employees, who have an inherent dislike for work, must be coerced, controlled, and directed—or even threatened—in order to

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work well. This, management agrees to do, with the result that the employee is satisfied—since his basic needs of food, shelter and security are being met by the job’s wages.

The second non-traditional style identified by McGregor suggests that these same industrial workers are somewhat different. They both need, and like, to work. It comes as an intrinsic part of living. Further, industrial work is, at best, only minimally challenging. Therefore, giving these workers responsibilities, consensus-relationships with their bosses, and goals jointly established with management, all result in greater work efficiency and happier workers.

What is the point for management styles for pastors in local churches? This study should issue a warning to us. It should say that the pattern of the world—clearly seen in Christ’s words, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them” (Matt 20:25)—illustrate a people-using style of management. It specializes in command structures, and clear lines of authority (to be discussed in chapter eight).

By contrast, “whoever wants to be become great among you must be your servant” (Matt 20:26). The Christian leaders choice, and management responsibility, is to be a people-builder, not a people-user. These distinctions are not trite and passing. The question always asked in matters of ministry should be: how does this requirement or relationship reflect on each person’s responsibility to love God more, and love others accordingly? Are relational issues being sacrificed on the altar of efficiency, reputation, public relations, or image? Would these decisions be supported by the Kingdom-measurements of righteousness, joy, and peace (cf. Rom 14:17)?

Let us illustrate. John regularly reminds himself, and others, at the Multnomah School of the Bible that *one of the greatest standards of integrity for any Christian organization or church is how they treat each other in staff and/or faculty relationships!* Is there, *first*, a brother-to-brother, or kindred commitment? Are author-

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ity structures secondary to the agenda of developing more skilled lovers—of God, and of others? Does the faculty hold up the staff as equal and valuable co-laborers in the ministry efforts?

The point is the following: it does not matter what the outside, public image of an organization is—compared to the inside, personal relationships of compassion, concern, and love. We are to be *back-door* more than *front-door* people. Front-door people are principally concerned with public image. Back-door people are primarily concerned with people, and genuinely Christian relationships—with needs, offenses, or the principle of mercy and forgiveness. Our medieval farmer, and landlord, worried about front-door matters—to the neglect of his greater responsibilities in his home. Our traditional churches, managed by traditional, Gentile-style pastors, use people to their personal or institutional ends. And the whole work is called *Christian*. It, and we, dare not make these mistakes.

Why is that, all-too-often, we have to warn a brother or sister before they go to work in a church, or for a Christian organization? Why is it that Christian employers often take greater advantage of Christian employees than even pagans would do? The answer, at least in part, is this matter of leadership style verses personal needs. God has created us to be a people who are to need to, and enjoy, work. But work, and task-related responsibilities, is never to replace relationships. If forced to choose, we are to love people, and use things. Some of the greatest forms of immorality come from switching these price tags: that is, loving things and using people! Christ's words were to stop the disciples in their tracks—"not so with you!"

In industry, the product is goods or services. Profit margins are essential. But, even there, management theorists are beginning to understand some important principles about the value, and needs, of their people. In the Church, we are looking at the wrong models. Rather than thinking of the church as a corporation with a president, a command-structure form of management, and a need for professional public images as its product, we should rather understand that we are

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in the business of producing mature, and maturing, believers who learn to grow in the context of corporate relationships—encouraging the greatest allegiance toward the True Head.

This relationship is motivated by love—not fear or guilt, or obligation. Pastors are to lead by example, not by “lording it over.” Similar allegiances, in the lives of believers and leaders alike, are evidences in good works that reflect similar commitments to the Lordship of Christ. Nothing less is satisfactory to the King of Kings.

So, pastors can be bad, or good, salesmen. It all depends on what we are representing, and how. If we see our *product* as physical assessments of success, image, or status, then we will have our reward only in this life. If, on the other hand, we see our responsibilities in terms of the nurture and care of God’s people—from spiritual cradle to the “face-to-face” (1 Cor 13:12) translation—then we are working properly for eternal rewards.

If our preoccupation is with physical or visible results, then we have misunderstood the Kingdom of God, and the real work of God’s Church:

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.
For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal
(2 Cor 4:18).*

But if our product is seen as people, and our leadership style is seen as serving them—and their spiritual concerns and needs in the truest sense—then “your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58). Those kinds of sales have eternal dividends!

CHURCH LEADERS AS SERVANTS

Behaviorial scientists long ago discovered that people do things for their own reasons—more than ours. As such, management cannot motivate people—people motivate themselves. Employees make decisions because of internal concerns—needs known or unknown—

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but needs and concerns related to survival, security, and ultimately personal fulfillment and satisfaction.

These observations can be used to the Church's advantage. The greatest, God-designed, need of a believer is to develop his or her skills as a lover: as a lover of God, and a love of others. The way this translates out in life is as follows: loving God is measure by obedience. Loving others is measured by service.

Every goal, discussion, committee meeting, program, financial priority, leadership position, ministry-effort, and anticipated direction needs to be measured against this mission purpose. Does this issue-under-consideration better facilitate the believer's love of God, and/or does it better develop skills of doing "good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Gal 6:10).

Elders, who are the responsible church leaders in the New Testament, must saturate their thinking with this kind of agenda. How do pastoral and teaching efforts further this end? Do staff stipends, and program plans, result in obedience and service? Do we as church leadership serve ourselves more than others? Are we leading by example rather than by edict? Are our families proof-positive of the biblical standards for marriages, parenting, and loving God—not money?

When a congregation *hears* this kind of a message taught in the homes, small groups, and gathered meetings of the assembly—and *sees* this kind of a message lived out in the leadership styles of its leaders—then we have understood Paul's words:

*For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many....
Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Cor
10:33-11:1).*

When a congregation sees leadership who obey the Word in their lives, and who honor their parents, marriages and families in their communities, then that church is going to be motivated in the finest sense—in spiritual terms that will last into eternity.

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That's true motivation for the Church: elders as pastor-teachers with a strategy—that sells the right product—in service to the real Master.

