LEADING TODAY
IN ANTICIPATION
OF TOMORROW'S CHURCH

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It is my privilege during this quadrennium to chair the Board of General Superintendent's Thought Partners.

It is our responsibility to work with the Board of General Superintendent's in determining the critical issues facing the church, then providing options for the General's consideration in the address of these issues. We have gathered several critical issues under four umbrella concerns:

1) Organizational Structure

2) Theology

3) Communication

4) Leadership Development

Leadership development is my focus today.

ILLUS: In a recent discussion with several strong laymen who no longer attend the Church of the Nazarene, I discovered that much of their rationale for leaving the church focused in their pastors — poor preaching, little financial acumen, apprehensive (fearful?) of strong entrepreneurial laymen and most importantly, they demonstrated little evidence of leadership skills.

That last one was like salt in an open wound to me.

Why? Because leadership is **<u>the</u>** key to the success of any organization/entity/enterprise—including the church.

I am talking leadership at all levels of the church including lay as well as clergy.

So — <u>let's think about leadership</u>.

<u>It is important for you for two reasons</u>

1). You are training leaders.

2). You are leaders.

Hesselbein—"Leadership transition is the ultimate test of leadership. The way you leave an organization is more important than how you found it".

How do we hand over the church to the next generation?

<u>What are the most essential qualities desired in today's</u>

leaders who lead in anticipation of tomorrow's church?

Some "givens" — Spirit-filled, spiritually minded, unquestioned integrity, authentic, trustworthy, discerning, creative, willing to be vulnerable, risk-takers, transparent, visionary, courageous, intelligent etc.

Here's my list of the top 7 qualities needed in the leaders who lead in anticipation of tomorrow's church.

1. **We need leaders who will be prophetic.**

What does it mean to be "prophetic"?

Historically, **Prophetism** has related to an understanding of God's role and activity in the human situation.

That divine role has normally been understood, interpreted, and announced by one who is called a prophet or seer.

As a prophet/seer, one exercises two main functions:

1). "sees" — apprehends that which is not normally apparent/that which is revealed by God.

2). "speaks forth"—Proclaims that which he has seen (that which God has shown him).

Walter Brueggeman in his book, *The Prophetic Imagination*

"The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception **alternative** to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."

The key word is "alternative".

Prophets provide a different view of things.

As "seers" they see things through divinely enlightened eyes.

They perceive alternative ways of accomplishing mission. They live on the edge. They are risk-takers — pathfinders.

In other words

Prophets are people who:

1) Think Critically

Reading the times and cultures, understanding the church, listening to God.

2) Act Catalytically

Speaking for God to move people to action.

Never has our need for prophetic leadership been so acute.

Never in our soon-to-be one hundred years of existence have we so critically needed spiritually-minded men and women who think and act prophetically.

2. We need leaders who lead, not just manage.

The Board of General Superintendents spends most of its time managing.

Putting out fires—

Crisis in churches

Local church—self governing

These local churches are crying for leadership.

Managing is not leading. Though it is necessary.

3. We need leaders who lead from hope, not fear.

There is an attitude fostered by some leaders that we must hold on to what we have (not unlike the man given one talent).

This is a fear born out of a mindset which has it that the organization may lose its identity or momentum under "my watch".

So the attitude is to protect, guard, serve as gatekeeper.

To be dominated by such leadership is to negate a potentially powerful, productive future.

We must have leaders who lead from hope, faith, and trust.

Such leaders elevate the climate and change the culture of organizations and churches.

Guardians of the status quo are an antithesis to who we are theologically.

It seems to me that Wesleyans — people of radical optimism and are by their very nature leaders of hope.

That's the kind of leader needed in these early days of Century 21.

4. Leaders must lead with a fierce and fiery passion to preserve the core values.

Core Values written by the Board of General Superintendents.

We must lead for revival, renewal, recommitment to our reason for being.

The mission is the message.

If we lead from the posture of hope, then we must be willing to find creative, relevant forms for the communication of the message to the new generation.

I believe this post-modern world resonates best to the proclamation of holiness as Christ likeness with our unique Wesleyan stance which stresses both subsequentness/instantaneousness and process/gradual growth

*It may well be our day — Bustle/Baptist leader

5. Leaders must stimulate progress

Jim Collins — "Preserve the core; stimulate progress".

B H A G — What do you have to do to reach a membership of one billion while still retaining your core values?"

We will not accomplish our Centennial goals by adhering to the status quo.

We must be willing to "be all things to all people that **"by all means we win some"**.

Methodologies are not sacrosanct — I often say to pastors: "If the old methods are working for you, keep working them; if not, you are empowered/given freedom to try new ministry forms until you find what works in your context, then work it."

Leadership that operates from hope says to the practitioners — "I trust you; I'm willing to take the risk with you. I will stand alongside you—support you—resource you." That's the kind of leadership that stimulates progress.

6. Leaders must lead from influence, not position.

General Superintendent Hugh C. Benner/Amarillo-

> I was in awe. I have great respect for the office I held. No one is awe-struck these days by titles, positions, it did not take me sixteen years on a college campus to figure that out.

We influence people most profoundly by our values, priorities, convictions, world view and by who we are in the deepest part of our being.

People will follow the leader who is trustworthy and authentic and the battle for follower ship has to be won here before the leader sounds the call to charge.

This is true whatever title one may wear.

7. Christian leaders must lead from the servant-mind of Jesus Christ.

Max Lucado — *Just Like Jesus*

"What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you?"

What if, for twenty-four hours, Jesus wakes up in your bed, walks in your shoes, lives in your house, assumes your schedule?

Your boss becomes his boss, your mother becomes his mother, your pains become his pains?

With one exception, nothing about your life changes. Your health doesn't change. Your circumstances don't change. Your schedule isn't altered. Your problems aren't solved. Only one change occurs.

What if, for one day and one night, Jesus lives your life with His heart? Your heart gets the day off, and your life is led by the heart of Christ.

His priorities govern your actions. His passions drive your decisions. His love directs your behavior.

What would you be like? Would people notice a change?

Your family—would they see something new? Your Coworkers—would they sense a difference? What about the less fortunate? Would you treat them the same?

And your friends? Would they detect more joy? How about your enemies? Would they receive more mercy from Christ's heart than from yours?

And you? How would you feel? What alterations would this transplant have on your stress level? Your mood swings? Your temper? Would you sleep better?

Would you see sunsets differently? Death differently?

Taxes differently?

Any chance you'd need fewer aspirin or sedatives? How about your reaction to traffic delays? (Ouch, that touched a nerve.)

Would you still dread what you are dreading? Better yet, would you still do what you are doing?

Would you still do what you had planned to do for the next twenty-four hours? Pause and think about your schedule. Obligations. Engagements. Outings.

Appointments. With Jesus taking over your heart,

would anything change?

Keep working on this for a moment. Adjust the lens of

your imagination until you have a clear picture of

Jesus leading your life, then snap the shutter and

frame the image.

What you see is what God wants. He wants you to "think

and act like Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5)

*The more you and I are like the God revealed to us in

Jesus Christ, the more effective we will be as leaders.

My Text

Listen—Phil. 2:5-11

Let me put the text in context.

Follow me — that's what leadership is all about!

Follow me as I follow Christ — that's what Christian

leadership is all about.

Christian leaders are intent on being like Jesus who

"emptied himself," "made himself nothing," "took

upon himself the nature of a servant" — and these

qualities must in inner principle be operating in the

lives of leaders who would lead from the servant-

mind of Jesus Christ.

What does servant-mindedness look like in the leaders of

N. B. C.?

I think it looks like love — the same love that flows from the sacred heart of our Lord as described by St. Paul.

One could substitute “Jesus” for “Love”

The servant mind of Jesus.

“Love is patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs, does not delight in evil but rejoices with the Truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails”. I Corinthians 13

Let me contextualize this a bit more.

We are church leaders — You are not a church but you are **<u>the</u>** church wherever you are, including N. B. C.

We are the people of God, first and foremost!

While leading the church, we must be the people of God to each other.

If we cannot be the people of God to each other and model the love we see in Jesus, how can we be the people of God to our world.

To have the servant mind of Christ has everything to do

with how we relate to and work with the people in this circle today.

It has everything to do with how we view and treat the people that answer to us/those over whom we have administrative authority—sobering truth.

Great leaders are servants first because that's who we are, deep down inside, long before we were extruded into leadership roles.

Ron Sider — "*Living Like Jesus*"

For many years I prayed regularly for the Spirit-filled gift of working biblically for justice and peace. Then a few years ago, I incorporated that request in a broader prayer. I began to ask God regularly for the Spirit-tilled gift of combining evangelism and social transformation.

Today I just pray to become more like Jesus—to learn how, in the power of the Spirit, to help the church become more like him.

The greatest thing we can give the church is a Christlike woman/man—one who leads from the servant mind of Jesus Christ.