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Principles and Ethics for Educational Leaders

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John Kotter writes, “Most U.S. corporations today are overmanaged and underled” (Kotter, 2008, p. 5). Using the analogy of going into battle Kotter adds, “No one yet has figured out how to manage people effectively into battle; they must be led” (p.7). Using such an analogy is appropriate to describe the differences between management and leadership. Managers are most concerned with the process of bringing order out of chaos; fighting the skirmishes that holds the ground that has been conquered or to advance to the next objective. Leaders look beyond the battle to the big picture: to the end of the war. Success is not measured by winning or losing one battle, but whether if at the end of the war, the purpose for going to war (the vision) was achieved.

Battles are won by managers; wars are won by leaders. The role of leadership is all about vision. Wars that have been fought by our American forces are usually those that have a vision of replacing oppression with freedom. The vision includes free elections, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from oppression, and an open society. The battles fought have been to rid ourselves and our friends of dictators and tyrants. In the vision of freedom, those that oppose freedom are the enemies which must be conquered in battle. Winning the war however only happens when the hearts and minds of the people have been won to the vision that a people can have freedom. Even if there are battles left to fight, the war is won when the vision becomes a reality. The real purpose of leadership is creating a vision that can be internalized by those that are led. Success only happens when managers manage and followers follow led by the guiding light of the vision.

Joan Gallos gives a further illustration of this concept. “At the outset Moses thought that the two hardest parts of his job were persuading the Israelites to trust him and persuading

Pharaoh to let his people go” (2008, Forward, p. xv). Leading the people out of Egypt was an objective of management. Getting them into the Promised Land was the vision. In order to succeed with the vision, Moses had to contend with the hearts, mind, and spirit of the people. Gallos writes, “When the people are the problem, the solution lies in them” (p. xv).

Battles can be fought without vision. Lack of the vision on the part of the Israelites caused them to tremble at the thought of fighting the giants of Canaan. They at first refused to be led by Moses because they had not “caught the vision”. When rebuked for their rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea, the people attempted to fight against the Amalekites and Canaanites, but lost the battle (Numbers 14: 20-45, KJV). Because they lacked the vision, they were routed by the enemy. Moses, however, was able to create the spark of that vision in the hearts of Joshua and Caleb. Vision must be contagious, transferrable, and internalized. It was Moses’ vision that captured the hearts of Joshua and Caleb, and eventually grew under their leadership to capture the hearts and minds of the people. But that was after Moses’ death, and 40 years of wilderness wanderings.

The Educational Leader is in such a battle today; one in which hearts and minds are often constrained by competing forces. On the one hand there is the battleground of the home. Parents may or may not value education, or their educational values include culture, traditions, and mores at odds with what is available to them in education. Children may be willing or unwilling pupils. Laws require children to go to school. Drop-out rates are often high in some demographics. Then there is the community of educators that have their own ideas about what constitutes appropriate education. There is an ever growing battleground between public policy

and private education. Constituencies for the educational leader, the followers, include parents, pupils, professionals, politicians, and the public. What then is the role of the educational leader?

The role of the educational leader

The greatest task for the educational leader is one of alignment. Education is a bridge that takes someone from where they are to a place that we commonly call achievement or success. How does the educational leader get all constituencies aligned so that they are all walking over the same bridge in the same direction? Kotter observes,

Unless many individuals line up and move together in the same direction, people will tend to fall all over one another. To executives who are overeducated in management and undereducated in leadership, the idea of getting people moving in the same direction appears to be an organizational problem. What executives need to do, however, is not organize people but align them. (Kotter, 2008, p. 10)

Secondly, how do leaders get all constituencies to understand that the primary object of education is the achievement of the pupil? The achievement of other constituents is secondary to the education of the student. Parents, professionals, politicians, and the public are hand holders in crossing the bridge. The problem is that each of these at times attempt to dominate or control the learning process with the goal that the student will *learn* in accordance with the agenda, vision, and values of the constituent. The vision of each may not converge on behalf of the learner. The task of the educational leader then is to create alignment in the competing visions.

Christian leaders in education are particularly aware of the competing visions and agendas that exist in today's educational society. There is a great divide between public and

private education. The ideology of separation of church and state pervades public policy and unfortunately has captured the hearts of parents, professionals, and politicians where education is concerned. Not all leaders are Christian leaders, yet among them are sincere men and women that value honesty, integrity, and fairness. They love their work and they love their students. There are educators that are not opposed to including religion or philosophy in education, believing that a *liberal* education is intended to empower the student to deal with complex questions. They are willing to accommodate other views and are open to Christian influence.

There are also those which have a strong anti-Christian bias. They want to keep God and prayer out of schools. They want to secularize all facets of education, intent on promoting secular humanism and “science falsely so called” (I Timothy 6:20, KJV). The field of education is a battleground of spiritual warfare and the Christian educational leader has tremendous challenges. At the same time, a Christian educational leader has advantages. These include the Christian leader’s worldview and the spiritual support formed by relationships in the Christian community. Also, educational leaders are guided by ethics and principles at work in the educational community that fosters respect among colleagues. A Christian educational leader must win the respect of others in order to be able to influence them with a vision.

The Christian leader’s worldview

Advantages for the Christian leader include first and foremost the knowledge and understanding that leadership is about relationship. The Christian leader integrates a personal worldview with a Christian worldview. The Christian worldview is a source of principles and ethics that go beyond those, for example of the American Education Research Association or other professional organization. For the Christian leader, the whole educational community

consists of learners (Deckerd, 2002, Slide 11) and this includes each constituency of pupil, parent, professional, politicians, and the public. The Christian leader knows that a positive relationship must be developed with each in order to promote the vision that would ultimately converge on the behalf of the learner.

Leadership is not defined by how much power or authority the leader has, “although these are central to its practice” (Gallos, 2008, p. 3). John Maxwell quotes J. Oswald Sanders with a simple definition for leadership. “Leadership is influence” (2007, Introduction, p. viii). But influence can only develop as relationship develops. Influence starts with the headship of Jesus Christ and is passed through the Christian leader to those being led. From the Lord’s influence, the Christian leader receives an ethical base which begins by understanding the nature of man and the need for salvation (Decker, 2002, Slide 6). The Christian leader is influenced by the Bible, to gain wisdom and knowledge that will be used in developing relationships with parents, professionals, and the public. From these relationships and by using the Christian worldview, the leader models outcomes that become part of the vision of leadership.

Within the Christian worldview are principles and ethics that should serve to define the character of the educational leader. When Christian principles are a part of the ethical base of a leader, the challenges are placed in the hands of God, and the realm of leadership comes under the headship of Christ. Of particular importance are those Biblical principles of wisdom and integrity that exemplify a godly and holy lifestyle. Coupled with knowledge of the value of learning and the ability to say and do the right things, a Christian educational leader can rest assured in a very important promise from Proverbs 16:7, “When a man’s ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (KJV).

The support of a Christian community

The second advantage for a Christian leader is the support of a Christian community. Christian leaders do not develop in isolation nor do they lead in isolation. Any pastor or leader for example that shuns fellowship with or accountability to other leaders will suffer deficiency and end up developing self-sufficiency inconsistent with principles of being in the body of Christ. It is a recipe for failure. Paul writes, “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Romans 14:7, KJV). The same is true for educational leaders.

Solomon suggests there are three reasons for the *multitude of counselors*. First is the need for safety. Solomon writes, “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 11:14, KJV). Leaders endanger their following unless they are given to listening to others. An important principle that was highlighted by John Maxwell is that a leader that masters communication will master conflict (Maxwell, 2007, Chart for Proverbs 15:1-7). Communication must be a two way street, otherwise conflict will develop which will impede internalization of the vision by others.

Secondly, Solomon writes, “Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors, they are established” (Prov. 15:22, KJV). The definition of leadership suggests that the vision comes to reality only with the help of others. Without followers, leadership does not exist. Leadership is hard work. God gave Moses Aaron and Hur. To Paul he gave Timothy, Titus, Luke and others. It is safe to believe that in every group that must be led, there is someone placed by God to be a support for the Christian leader. It is the way God works.

Third, “For by wise counsel thou shalt make war: and in [the] multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 24:6, KJV). We have already postulated that spiritual warfare is determined for the educational leader. The *Daily Prayer Guide* (Storming the Gates, 2009) is an example of a support network for the Christian involved in educational leadership. We are in daily communication with the commander of our army, Jesus Christ. Our prayers serve to counsel Jesus on the needs of those on our list. Although Jesus knows every need, it is the process that it is important. We are advising our Lord, “Professor Smith needs encouragement today”. “Principle Jones needs strength to confront an antagonistic school board, Lord.”

The Educational Leader has community respect

The third advantage for the educational leader is the respect that is a part of the educational community and that which comes from those in public and private sectors. Educational leaders are looked to by decision makers in business, politics, medicine, science, government, and even the military, to be guides in every endeavor of life. In one sense, educational leaders do not have to create a vision which must then be promoted. They are expected to have one at all times. The role of educational leaders is one requiring them to provide answers, influence policy makers, justify expenditures, and oversee innovation. College professors are interviewed as a routine part of news programs trying to explain current events. Congress constantly looks to economist, most of which are practicing professors of universities, to explain or suggest solutions for a global economic crisis. To explain any major happening anywhere in the world, educational leaders which are a part of “think tanks”, foundations, or departments of studies from universities for a particular culture, appear regularly on newscast or are called upon to assist agencies to provide answers and solutions.

The reason why educational leaders have so much influence is because of the very nature of the field of education and research. The customers or constituents of educational leaders realize that there are high standards required for such a career. It requires a great investment in time and money to earn the credentials. But more importantly, it requires a great deal of discipline and integrity to develop the skills that make an educational leader.

The American Educational Research Association developed its *Ethical Standards* understanding full well that educational leaders will live in glass houses. Although they were written primarily for those involved in research, the forward includes this statement; “The standards that follow remind us that we are involved not only in research but in education” (Strike et al, 2002, p. 1). The strong emphasis on relationship is not exclusive to a Christian worldview; it is a major rationale for AERA Ethical Standards. In order to be a leader, relationship must exist. Relationships within the educational community include parent, pupil, and the public, but they start within the educational community. In a Christian worldview judgment must begin at the house of God (I Peter 4:17, KJV). The same is true for the AERA. It insists that at the outset its own house must be in order.

Educational leaders must exhibit honesty and integrity both in research and leadership. Part I, Standard 4 is one example of why educational leaders have gained respect in the community. Because their opinions are sought after by so many Standard 4 reads,

“Educational researchers should honestly and fully disclose their qualifications and limitations when providing professional opinions to the public, to government agencies, and others who may avail themselves of the expertise possessed by members of the AERA” (Strike et al., 2002, p. 8)

Educational leaders are reminded through each section of *Ethical Standards* concerning the necessity for honesty, integrity, and fairness. The relationships within the educational community include research populations, educational institutions, students, the public, those that disseminate research, and those that use research. Each section of *Ethical Standards* speaks to principles and ethics relevant to a specific part of the leader's community.

Whether involved in research or not, educational leaders have a responsibility to the field of research and the field of education. This includes the responsibility to not misrepresent research, fabricate lies, or use falsehoods in dealing with others. It includes a responsibility that leaders conduct their lives in such a way that does not bring shame to the field of education, or to the institutions for which they work. This includes avoiding all forms of inappropriate conduct to their associates, such as harassment, unjust discrimination in hiring, retention, and advancement, or using power for personal or professional advantages.

Why is this all so important? Warren Bennis writes in *On Becoming A Leader*, "the manager does things right; the leader does the right thing" (Naughton-Travers, 2007, Slide 8). The leader-follower relationship is developed from interpersonal skills rather than technical skills such as organizing, problem solving, or planning. Dobbs and Field give a simple formula for leadership when contrasting managers and leaders in law enforcement as an example. "The formula is simple -- by knowing their business, knowing themselves, and knowing their people" (1993, Leadership Task, ¶ 5). This implies that the style of leadership is secondary to the character of the leader. It is about the heart and spirit of a leader being able to deal with the heart and the spirit of followers.

Leadership style should be an outgrowth of the character that exhibits the behaviors, principles, and ethics that are consistent with a Christian worldview and that is being supported by the framework of relationships established under Christ.

The style of the Educational Leader

Leadership style differs from one leader to another. It is also true, that leadership style may differ from situation to situation. This is the theory advanced by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in a model called *situational leadership theory (SLT)* which is used by more than 400 of the Fortune 500 companies (Robbins and Judge, 2009, p. 395). In developing SLT, Hersey and Blanchard posit that the right leadership style “is contingent on the level of the follower’s readiness” (p. 395). It might be pointed out that the children of Israel were not ready to follow Moses into the Promised Land. It did not matter that Moses was anointed by God and that he was the meekest man upon the earth (Numbers 12:3, KJV). Moses was able to transfer his vision to Joshua and Caleb, but it wasn’t until after the 40 years of wilderness wandering that the followers were ready to go over Jordan. The one thing that remained constant was the vision. The question is asked, what changed? Was it because leadership changed, was it because followers changed, or was it because situations changed?

Older leadership theories defined leadership by traits and behaviors. In using the assessments of leadership style, those that create classifications based on the traits and behaviors of leaders, treat style as a narrowly defined box that assumes all followers and all situations will be treated the same way. Common styles taken from *Leadership Styles: using the right one for your situation* includes the following:

- Autocratic leadership. This style uses power and force over followers. It is most effective with routine jobs and unskilled laborers
- Bureaucratic leadership. Leaders that work by the book. This appears to be more of a management style, requiring high levels of control and inflexibility.
- Democratic leadership. The leader invites input from others, but makes the final decision. It is often used in teamwork.
- Laissez-Faire Leadership. The hands-off approach to leadership is best used when subordinates are skilled or self starters and need little control or supervision. This assumes that subordinates have at least a sufficient part of the vision where motivation already exists.
- People-oriented or task-oriented leadership. Based on Fiedler's contingency theory, this defines leadership behavioral traits with preferences toward production or people (See Leadership Styles).

According to Jung's Typology, there is a suggestion that leadership style is mostly a matter of personality. Many assessments built upon Jung's theories, including the Jung Typology Test and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) result in at least providing some insight into common trait patterns that may explain behaviors associated with a leader's personality. The traits of the ENFJ, for example is one that suggest a leader is an extrovert, is intuitive, bases decisions on interpersonal skills, and that is well organized and structured. In the book *Type Talk At Work* leaders that have the ENFJ personality traits would be a "smooth-talking persuader" (Kroeger, Thuesen, and Rutledge, 2002, p. 386). Under Fiedler's theory, an

ENFJ might be people-oriented leaders. The ENFJ under some other theory possibly could be autocratic using exceptionally strong persuasion skills or maybe democratic based on intuition. Personality and style seems to be a mixed bag if one wants to believe that leadership style is an outgrowth of personality as demonstrated by behavioral traits.

Leadership style should be an outgrowth of character rather than personality. There is an old saying, "Love is blind". The character of love demands that fair treatment will result regardless of the nature of the situation or the nature of the followers. In one sense, love is neutral in keeping with God's character of not being a "respector of persons" (Acts 10:34, KJV). A leader may have to resort to an autocratic style in one situation, but be able to use a democratic style in another situation, and have the ability to show love in both cases. There may be a time when laissez-faire can be used, or a leader may be constrained by a level of company bureaucracy and use a leadership style to match. What is consistent is the character? Love is in play. Integrity and honesty are at work. Decisions are based on principles not politics. A character of love, honesty, and integrity means that a leader's style will be consistent with treating followers as Paul admonished Timothy:

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observes these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality (I Timothy 5:21, KJV).

As a result of character, leaders can learn to use styles to match the situation or the needs of the ones that need to be influenced. It is important that Christian educational leaders attempt to become influencers of parents, professionals, politicians, and the public in trying to align them in a vision that actually comes from the Word of God. A different style may be needed for each.

The Christian educational leader and the parent

Education is first and foremost the domain of the family unit and a student's educational growth should only enhance and support the relationships that exist within the family as the building block of a community, and ultimately society. This should be the vision of the Christian educational leader in keeping with one of the fundamental commandments of God. While Deuteronomy 6: 4 - 25 specifically speak of teaching children the commandments of God and of the heritage of God's people, the principle is that the responsibility of education begins in the home.

Many homes are not equipped in terms of educational ability or resources to do the job of providing math, English, or science instruction. But every parent has the duty to be involved in the education of their children. It is so ordered by God. While many educational leaders would rather not consider the religious aspect of parental involvement, most all educational leaders believe that parental involvement is a must in order to ensure the best quality of education. Nelson Hernandez, a writer for the Washington Post, comments in his article, *Back to School for Parents: Prince George delegate takes on tepid involvement in education*,

A study by the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, a research group in Texas, noted that school systems with highly involved teachers and parents can expect higher test scores and better behavior (Metro Section, p. B01).

The Christian Science Monitor quotes the 2006 study *Silent Epidemic* by Civic Enterprises, a public policy firm in Washington and says,

Research shows a correlation between parental involvement and academic success, and young people themselves see the need for it: 71 percent of high school dropouts said better communication between schools and parents was one key to keeping students in school (Khadaroo, 2008, p. 2).

This means that Christian education leaders have an opportunity to impact school programs and education if they are able to get parents involved. The advantage for the Christian leader is the understanding of Christian values and knowing that Christians that follow God's word will be involved with the education of their student. The more Christian parents involved, the greater likelihood that Christian educational leaders are able to hold back the negative influences that exist by secular progressives in trying to change the nature of education. Christian leaders should exert much of their influence on the role of parents in education and increasing parental involvement.

The Christian leader and the public

In contrast to the scriptural principle that education is a parental responsibility, public policy makers both in education and in politics believe in the mantra of Hillary Clinton and others, "It takes a village" to educate children. The ideology comes from an African proverb which suggests that children are wards of a collective society, and that the whole tribal village contributes to the upbringing of a child. Jeff Rosen in writing for the *New Republic* quoted an interview that Clinton gave to Newsweek in which she insisted that "there was no such thing as other people's children" (Rosen, 1996, Section Washington Diarist, ¶ 5). Instead, according to Rosen, Clinton while worrying that "the village" would become a metaphor for the federal government actually believes that the federal government should be the village (¶ 5).

Christian leaders understand the dangers of any philosophy that moves away from any Biblical principle. Part of the Christian educational leader's responsibility is to create a vision and then align parents, professionals, politicians, and the public to follow that vision. The vision of education of children and young people is one that is already established in the scripture; one in which the family unit is enhanced. As children are properly educated, family relationships are made stronger as children learn job skills, communications skills, grow in knowledge, and develop social skills that are intended to benefit, not harm, family relationships.

Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard Spivak assert that one of the roles of the public in education is to empower parents. In their book *Sugar & Spice and No Longer Nice*, the authors write on the increasing violence among girls in schools. While some might contend that the authors are buying-in to the idea that "it takes a village" to fight school violence, there is validity in two comments by the authors. They write, "We want a society that is much more supportive of your [parents] efforts to raise your daughter" and adds, "a society committed to helping parents would make different decisions" (2005, p. 19).

For a Christian educational leader this should mean that leaders must lead social change or public responses to appropriate public commitment to education by,

- Strengthening the power of parents not institutions
- Recognizing and celebrating values that enhance relationships in a godly manner, first of all in the home and then in the community
- By emphasizing the empowering of parents rather than the disenfranchisement of parents in the educational process

Summary

Educational leadership differs in the scope and reach of the leader's influence compared to the CEO of a manufacturer or business. It is not about the complexity of making products, engineering initiatives, or financial management – it is more about people than any other endeavor, with the exception of the church. There is a strong similarity between the role of an educational leader and the role of a church pastor. There is a remarkable similarity between an educational institution and a church institution. Both are focused on the hearts and minds of those within its influence.

The end result of the leadership is measured in terms of the meaning of life. Life will be saved or destroyed by what happens to or for an individual within the educational process. As a critical example, many educational institutions are destroying the faith of children and young people, aided by secular progressives, atheistic professors, and humanist. Even in elementary education, children are being exposed to ideas that are contrary to Biblical teaching. The result then becomes a life or death, heaven or hell issue, not simply one of achievement. The only ones that “stand in the gap” are educational leaders, teachers, professionals, and parents whose hearts and minds have been filled with God's Spirit and God's Word.

For the Christian educational leader the task is even greater than that of a pastor, because the leader's “church” is not confined to the four walls of the church house. Rather than a congregation which is likely to be overwhelmingly believers, the Christian educational leader must contend with populations that include all races, all religions, all kinds of cultural backgrounds, as well as politicians and governments. The scripture that says it all for the Christian educational leader is Ephesians 6:12.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12, KJV).

The Christian educational leader therefore must be strongly rooted in Biblical principles and ethics, with a firm grasp of a Christian worldview in understanding the nature of God and the nature of man, and have the ability to increase in knowledge and wisdom. His leadership style must be flexible while his character must be consistent. More than anything, the Christian educational leader must reach out and enlist the support of his Christian community in order to “Storm the Gates” against the ever pervasive misdirection of our society.

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