A RESPONSE TO "TOWARD A MODEL OF

SERVANT LEADERSHIP"

Ola Farmer Lenaz Faculty Lecture

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of servant leadership has been extant for nearly two thousand years. Yet, why has servant leadership not been an evident and widely implemented model of church and Christian institutional operation, especially in regard to Southern Baptists? Robert Greenleaf observed:

> The servant idea is deep in the tradition on which American society rests. Consequently, when one notes that servant-led institutions seem not to be numerous today, one is led to conclude that the prospect for our being a servant-led society is not great.[1]

Greenleaf also noted that "the idea of servant is deep in Judeo-Christian heritage," but that "the idea of servant simply has not penetrated the part of our culture concerned with institutions that dominate so many lives."[2]

Since Greenleaf included churches and seminaries in his hierarchy of institutions which dominate lives, "Toward a Model of Servant Leadership" (TMSL) has presented a challenging hypothesis and an interesting model regarding servant leadership. Both the hypothesis and the model have raised important issues and questions, which have shaped this response.

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[1]Robert K. Greenleaf, *Seeker and Servant: Reflections on Religious Leadership*, ed. Ann T. Fraker and Larry C. Spears (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 275.

[2]Ibid., 201, 275.

CHAPTER 2

IMPORTANT ISSUES: REACTIONS TO "TOWARD A MODEL OF
SERVANT LEADERSHIP" (TMSL)

Futurist Joel Arthur Barker has asserted that "leadership is going to be so crucial in these next two decades."[1] However, what model of leadership will be effective in those decades?

The presenters of "Toward a Model of Servant Leadership" (TMSL) agreed with Henri J.M. Nouwen that the model needed is servant leadership, perhaps most of all "in the church."[2] Such leadership would be new for "*the church of tomorrow* (italics for emphasis), a leadership which is not modeled on the power of games of the world, but on the servant leader, Jesus . . . ."[3] While a leadership model based on Jesus would seem to appeal to Christian entities like churches and seminaries, important issues impact organizational design, implementation, and acceptance of a workable model. Among those issues are power, personality, and change.

The Issue of Power

Michael Youssef, formerly the Executive Director of the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership Training in Atlanta, has stated that "when many people think of leadership, they think

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[1]Joel Arthur Barker, *Future Edge: Discovering the New Paradigms of Success* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1992), 159.

[2]Charles W. Gaines and Charles L. Register, "Toward a Model of Servant Leadership" (paper read at Ola Farmer Lenaz Faculty Lecture, New Orleans, Louisiana, 16 October 1998), 9.

[3]Ibid.

of power . . . , the ability to influence or induce behavior."[4] In TMSL, the issue of power is raised

about servant leadership with regard to the relationship of leaders to followers.[5] The issue is

highlighted also in the servant leadership behavior of empowering those led and served.[6]

Certainly, in Southern Baptist churches where deacons or church councils sometimes act as

"presbyters," members as "power brokers," and pastors as "CEO's" or "bishops," power is an

important issue, if not a grave concern. Thus, two parameters (among several others) which give

definition to the issue of power in churches (and seminaries) are attitude and decision making.

Research on leader effectiveness with respect to the concept and use of power has

identified various types of power which leaders employ, such as depicted in the French and

Raven Power Taxonomy: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, or

referent power.[7] However, Youssef contended that "Jesus differed from other leaders in His

concept and use of power."[8] According to Youssef, the key difference is evident in Jesus' attitude

of submission and service.[9] Therefore, the discussion in TMSL of servant leadership in terms of

the demonstrated attitude and teaching of Jesus about serving has presented important

implications for addressing current church problems and health through seminary pedagogy,

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[4]Michael Youssef, *The Leadership Style of Jesus* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 91.

[5]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership,* 5-6.

[6]Ibid., 13, 27.

[7]Gary A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 34-35.

[8]Youssef, *The Leadership Style of Jesus*, 91.

[9]Ibid., 97-98.

mentoring, and modeling. Yet, herein arises the other parameter, decision making, especially with regard to pedagogy and modeling.

Leader effectiveness research also has categorized the types of power which leaders use in terms of three different sources: positional power, personal power, and political power.[10] Control over decisions is a key ingredient of political power and is also a factor in the formation of coalitions or in the utilization of co-optation within an organization.[11] Obviously, the consideration of political power with regard to current church problems and behavior makes power an important issue and decision making a significant factor in seminary pedagogy and modeling.

Servant leadership decision making is addressed in TMSL in terms of empowering those led and served to become "more autonomous."[12] Servant leadership decision making is considered additionally in terms of organizational process ("collaborative decision making") and organizational structure ("top-down leadership" becomes a flattened pyramid in servant leadership).[13] However, seminary pedagogy which does not model making students more autonomous in the teaching designs and processes must be challenged as applied servant leadership. Similarly, seminary modeling which fails to teach "flattened pyramid" decision making in actual organizational structure and operation must be evaluated honestly, for a more participative pyramid (with recommendations flowing upward for decisions flowing downward)

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[10]Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 14-15.

[11]Ibid., 26-27.

[12]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership,* 5.

[13]Ibid., 11-13.

can be little different from current church situations of "presbyters," "bishops," and "power brokers."

One must note that Jesus did empower followers to become more autonomous. For example, Jesus' Great Commission deposited and demanded much decision making responsibility by followers, as did the apostles' directive on the service of deacons in Acts 6:1-7. Community service by students and faculty can provide insight on serving, but community climate should facilitate insight on servant-leading.

The Issue of Personality

Can any person become a servant leader? More pointedly, can any Christian become a servant leader? While the intuitive answer by Christians and the implied answer of TMSL to the second question, at least, might be affirmative, Greenleaf's lament over the scarcity of "servant-led institutions" would suggest otherwise.[14] Consideration also of the relationship problems evident in many Southern Baptist churches today might indicate the difficulty (or even absence) of contemporary Christians becoming effective servant-leaders, given that effective servant leadership enhances church relationships (as possibly indicated in Acts 6:1-7) and builds "a better society . . . , one that is more just and loving."[15] Out of such questioning and consideration (and perhaps lamenting) comes the issue of personality.

In assessing the findings of research into leader attributes, Yukel noted that "effective leaders in large, hierarchical organizations tend to have a strong need for power, a fairly strong

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[14]Greenleaf, *Seeker and Servant*, 275.

[15]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 14.

need for achievement, and a somewhat weaker need for affiliation**."**[16] Such a propensity for

power contrasts with servant leaders who "act first in giving away their power and authority," as

cited in TMSL.[17] It also seems to contrast with the mind of Christ prescribed for Christian

attitudes and actions.[18]

Gerald Bell discovered similar results in his research into the dominant psychological

needs of American society. Bell found that 35% of the general population had a strong need to

perform, 20% to please, and 16% to command.[19] Bell stated: "One point is very clear; we are a

performer society. This personality type pervades our institutions--business, education, medicine,

the arts, government, family, religion."[20] Since a performer, according to Bell, "changes his

values to go along with the most advantageous positions, and . . . seeks those tasks which

maximize his image and prestige," one can see the difficulties of creating an organizational

"climate of trust" with performers and of teaching performers to be servant-leaders through

cognitive pedagogy and participation in "collaborative decision making."[21]

Persons with a high dominance trait tend to desire power and authority, prestige, and

opportunity for individual accomplishments.[22] Even the disciples of Jesus wrestled with such

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[16]Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 271.

[17]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership,*13.

[18]Phil. 2:1-11.

[19]Gerald D. Bell, *The Achievers: Six Styles of Personality and Leadership* (Chapel Hill: Preston-Hill, Inc., 1973), 15.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 12-13.

[22]*Biblical Personal Profile System* (Minneapolis: Carlson Learning Company, 1995), 7.

desires and experienced strife among themselves, leading Jesus to contrast those desires with His demonstrated example of servant leadership.[23] If servant leaders are to be "always an incarnation of Christ," personality may be more than an issue of importance; it may be a formidable challenge![24]

The Issue of Change

Despite servant leadership having been a core value of this seminary for over two years, implementing the servant leadership model proposed in TMSL will result in changes in institutional pedagogy, structure, and processes. Hence, change is an important issue of consideration.

Institutional change to the proposed servant leadership model can come by adoption; however, individual change must come by acceptance. Both process and personal factors will affect the way such change is accepted by students, faculty, staff, trustees, and seminary constituency.

Regarding the process of change, Kurt Lewin identified three phases: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing.[25] The unfreezing phase aims "to motivate and make the individual or the group ready to change" by helping them see "the need for change."[26] Hersey and Blanchard

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[23]Luke 22:24-27.

[24]Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 18.

[25]Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, 2d ed. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), 161-164.

[26]Ibid., 162.

stated that, "in brief, unfreezing is the breaking down of the mores, customs, and traditions of an individual--the old ways of doing things--so that he is ready to accept new alternatives."[27] Thus, one apparent implementation of the issue of change is that the unfreezing phase can be difficult and even stressful for individuals involved in organizational change.

In proposing an institutional change toward operational servant leadership, Gaines and Register stated that "the implementation of servant leadership on an institutional level is dependant upon individual embracement of the concept."[28] One component of their proposed model, the Servant Leadership Conference, is even "based on the premise that servant leadership begins with the desire to change oneself."[29] But, the possible difficulty and stress of the unfreezing phase for those facing change in seminary pedagogy, structure, and processes may not be addressed adequately by appealing to nobleness ("seminaries, serving the church as its institution of higher learning, have the opportunity to transform society" through implementing servant leadership), alluding to benefits ("the student will learn to apply the concept of servant leadership to the local church and comprehend the benefits of servant leadership in building healthy churches"), or citing institutional models presently utilizing a servant leadership concept.[30] Why?

One reason has to do with the personal factor of the change process. Individuals have attitudes and values about "the old ways of doing things," as well as attitudes and values about a

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[27]Ibid.

[28]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 22.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., 15-19, 22-23.

perceived new way of doing things. While mentoring and modeling certainly may help individuals adjust to change, the implementation of institutional change through a model oriented toward informational instruction and organizational restructuring may need to be augmented with components that recognize the significance of (and struggle with) individual attitudes and values during unfreezing. For example, Bell asserted that the commander's "leadership style conflicts directly with demands for changing."[31] Unfortunately, far too many illustrations from contemporary Southern Baptist life give qualitative validation to that assertion.

Yes, this seminary publicly values "[following] the model of Jesus and [exerting] leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us."[32] But, "to implement servant leadership throughout the life and ministry" of the institution is a great challenge and will necessitate change, as mentioned in TMSL.[33] Before identification or internalization can occur in the change process (phase two: changing), the motivation to change must involve individual and group acceptance.[34]

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[31]Bell, *The Achievers*, 135.

[32]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 20.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Hersey and Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior*, 162.

CHAPTER 3

A REACTION TO THE PROPOSED
MODEL OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In TMSL, Gaines and Register suggested foundations of and structures for an

institutional model of servant leadership to be employed at New Orleans Baptist Theological

Seminary (NOBTS). Their hypothesis stated, "Through effective utilization of the proposed

models New Orleans Seminary could initiate a cycle of servant leadership development that will

follow students and employees from the campus into the local church."[1]

According to Dr. Charles Kelley, president of NOBTS, "The health of a seminary is

determined by the health of the churches its graduates lead."[2] Servant leadership is a core value

of NOBTS and, as such, should be transferred to graduates towards the end of impacting

churches. The responder will raise three questions for analysis regarding transferability of the

proposed model.

**Is It Possible to Effectively Teach Servant Leadership
Without Modeling Servant Leadership?**

The Model's Answer

The presenters asserted that servant leadership could not be taught in such a way

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[1]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 28.

[2]New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, *Eighty-First Academic Year Graduate Catalog for 1998-99*, p. x.

that would be transferable apart from a working model. Monitoring, the domain of the classical

classroom, was deemed ineffective in developing servant leaders. Mentoring was advocated as a

replacement for monitoring; yet, the thrust of the design was pure pedagogy with little reference

to the value of a model. The proposed Servant Leadership Institute focused on formal education

through a seminar, conference, and graduate level course. An institutional model was called for,

but not referenced for students. Personal servant leadership was to be developed through

mentoring groups.

Concerns

Research by Rosenbaum and Tucker indicated that observers "imitate the behavior of a

competent model more rapidly than that of an incompetent one."[3] Findley Edge wrote, "Lives

are impressed and changed far more by truths they see demonstrated than by those they hear

spoken."[4] Both observations support the presenters' concern for a working model if NOBTS is to

impact churches with the core value of servant leadership. However, learners would need to be

intentionally engaged with that model if it were to serve an educational role.

Frequently called the Master Teacher, Jesus relied heavily on modeling for shaping

disciples. Matt Friedeman noted, "During their [the disciples'] time of apprenticeship with Jesus,

He modeled before them both actions and attitudes."[5] Concluding that this was the most effective

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[3]Richard m. Rykman, *Theories of Personality*, 3d ed. (Montery, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1985), 361.

[4]Findley Edge, *Teaching For Results*, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H), 219.

[5]Matt Friedeman, *The Master Plan of Teaching* (Wheaton: Victor Books), 49.

way to change lives, Friedeman wrote, "Not surprisingly, if there is a discrepancy between our walk and our talk, students will be far more likely to do what we do, not what we say."[6]

New Testament authors were keenly aware of this teaching approach of Jesus. Paul urged the believers at Corinth to "imitate me."[7] He commended the believers of Thessalonica because they "became imitators of us and of the Lord."[8] The writer of Hebrews instructed, "We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."[9]

Albert Bandura proposed a classical modeling theory for educators. He suggested that learning via a competent model would require at least four intentional phases: (1) the attentional phase, requiring the teacher to provide clear and interesting cues that attract the learner to the model; (2) the retention phase, providing opportunities to practice or rehearse; (3) the reproduction phase, the point at which a student's value of the model leads him/her to match their behavior with that of the model; and (4) the motivational phase, a [post-graduation] phase in which students imitate the model because they feel that doing so will increase their own chances for success.[10]

The emphasis placed on classical classroom presentation in the proposed model could

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[6]Ibid.

[7]1 Cor. 4:16 NIV.

[8]1 Th. 1:6 NIV.

[9]Heb. 6:12 NIV.

[10]Robert E. Slavin, *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1994), 174-75.

potentially address the first phase suggested. Evaluation of phase four would come after a student has graduated and is serving in a local church. However, while phases two and three require a model, the proposed design does not provide students the opportunity to relate to the institutional model in such a way that retention or reproduction seem likely.

Robert Greenleaf's cited definition of servant leadership indicated that servant leadership begins "with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead."[11] Greenleaf's description of a natural feeling of wanting to serve implied that something supra-educational was foundational to servant leadership. One may be able to more formally teach leadership skills but not teach servant desires; or, servant leadership is better caught, than taught.

Conclusion

The presenters suggested that an institutional servant leadership design would be necessary to effectively teach graduates the value of servant leadership. However, the components of the proposed model did not weave this institutional design into the learning experiences of students. An effective use of an institutional design for modeling purposes would include the provision of a good model, intentionally directing the attention of students toward that model, providing ways for students to interact with and rehearse servant leadership behaviors demonstrated by that model, and develop meaningful ways to reinforce the value, post-graduation.

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[11]Robert Greenleaf, *The Servant As Leader* (Indianapolis: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 1991), 6, quoted in Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 4-5.

To What Degree Is a Seminary the Same as
Or Different from a Church?

The Model's Answer

The presenters proposed that, "From this institutional laboratory, members of the seminary community will be equipped to facilitate an understanding and implementation of servant leadership in and through the local church and its surrounding community."[12] This goal raised the question of nature. That is, to what degree is a seminary like a church and vice versa? Are the two entities enough alike that an institutional model on the seminary level could prove helpful for graduates serving in local churches? Are they so dissimilar that such a model would produce greater frustration?

Gaines and Register believed the nature of the two entities was similar enough to warrant transferability. The presenters agreed with Greenleaf's conclusion that "seminaries are best positioned in the structure of our society to inspirit the churches and equip them with the prophetic vision to become a forceful, society-building influence."[13]

The Seminary as Institution

Greenleaf produced a three-tier hierarchy of institutions which placed seminaries and other trusteed resources such as foundations at the top level. He wrote, "I see the role of seminaries as

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[12]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 20-21.

[13]Greenleaf, *Seeker And Servant*, 210, quoted in Gaines and Register, *Toward A Model of Servant Leadership*, 15.

pivotal and crucial to the quality of the total society."[14] Throughout his essays on the critical role

of the seminary in improving the quality of society, Greenleaf argued that the vitality of the

church depended on the revitalization of the seminary.[15]

Greenleaf's idealistic view of institutions contradicts many contemporary opinions.

Parker Palmer noted that institutions are now associated with bureaucracy, hierarchy, rigidity,

and gridlock.[16] Gene Getz suggested that institutions, though individual and unique, share some

common, less than desirable symptoms. Those symptoms included: organizations which become

more important than people, treating people like cogs in the machine; environments where

individuality and creativity are lost to the structural mass; atmospheres which squelch inquiry;

and procedural prisons.[17]

NOBTS, an institution of higher learning, has been able to avoid some of the pitfalls of

institutionalism. Other institutional factors, for good or bad, have naturally evolved into the

fabric of an eighty-one year heritage. The presenters' proposal of a servant leadership

institutional model affirms Greenleaf's idealistic view of institutions in general and a seminary's

unusual capacity to favorably impact society and rescue the church.

<div align="center">The Nature of the Church</div>

Kennon Callahan described the demise of the professional ministry movement in the

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[14]Ibid., 203.

[15]Ibid., 210.

[16]Parker Palmer, forward to *Seeker And Servant*, by Robert Greenleaf, ix-x.

[17]Gene Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 193-4.

latter half of the twentieth century. He noted the historical development of professionalism in the

United States during the years immediately following World War II and the direct impact of that

movement on those who vocationally served local churches. The traps of professionalism,

academic and technical preparation, collegiality, ethical standards of conduct set by professional

organizations, and so forth, emerged at that time.[18]

Alongside of the development of the position of professional, vocational minister was the

institutionalization of the church. As early as 1953, concerns over this matter were being

expressed. Paul Rountree Clifford observed that, regardless of the rhetoric of theologians, the

laity had concluded the church was an institution. "Frequently the institution is conceived in the

most impersonal terms as being an organization responsible for the fabric of cathedrals, church

buildings and chapels, and employing those men who are set aside to run the institution in each

locality and conduct the services."[19]

Gene Getz warned that institutionalism was a subtle trap into which the people of God

had repeatedly fallen. "People, plus structure, plus age, seemingly, more often than not, equals

institutionalism.[20]

Contrary to the popular view of church as institution, Clifford contended that "it is Christ

with his disciples in their corporate fellowship that ultimately constitutes the Church, and

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[18] Kennon Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990), 10-12.

[19] Paul Rountree Clifford, *The Mission of the Local Church* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1953), 28.

[20] Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*, 1934

without that there is no Church at all in the biblical sense. . . . The togetherness of believers in

Christ with their Lord ultimately constitutes the Church."[21] William Robinson concluded that

institutions were "of human contriving and are mortal. They have their beginnings . . . and they

come to a definite end."[22] By contrast, Robinson described the church as divine in origin,

immortal, a revelation of God, and a supernatural society.[23]

E.F. Scott wrote that characterizing the church as an institution was misleading at best.

The church, Scott advanced, had its true analogy in a nation.[24] The Bible describes the church as

the people of God, something of a spiritual nation. In addition, the church is called the body of

Christ, the bride of Christ, and a community of faith. Noteworthy is the absence of the church as

institution. More often than not, the church is pictured as a living organism rather than a fixed

organization such as an institution.

<center>A Comparison of the Seminary and the Church</center>

Those people who constitute the seminary community, it is presumed, are a part of the

universal church. However, heretofore, the seminary has refused the role of a local church.

Gaines and Register suggested three biblical presuppositions regarding the people of God then

applied them to the seminary setting. After surveying those three issues, they concluded, "Servant

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[21]Clifford, *The Mission of the Local Church*, 30.

[22]William Robinson, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Church*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), 118-9.

[23]Ibid., 119.

[24] E.F. Scott, *The Nature of the Early Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), 1.

leadership must flow from one's covenant relationship with God, a conviction of a divine call, and a commitment to the divine purpose to be like Christ."[25]

From that perspective, Gaines and Register waded into the uncharted waters of where a seminary stops and a church begins. One cannot deny that individual members of the seminary community have a personal, covenant relationship with Christ, a sense of divine call, and a commitment to the divine purpose to be like Christ. However, the degree to which those characteristics are corporately shared in a covenantal relationship in the seminary setting is a question for further investigation.

Many of the accepted functions of a local church are practiced at NOBTS. Members of the seminary community join for worship, engage in ministry, do the work of evangelism, seek to develop disciples, and enjoy fellowship. However, does a seminary accomplish those functions inherently different from a local church?

Seminaries are, among other things, centers for higher education. Churches also have educational goals. Israel Galindo has advised that, "Christian teaching is similar to other forms of education in that it also intentionally helps persons *become*. It is essentially different, and becomes Christian, when it redefines the basic educational categories of context, content, approach, outcome, and methods. . . ."[26] Galindo proceeded to suggest the different definitions that separate education from Christian education:

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[25]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 11.

[26] Israel Galindo, *The Craft of Christian Teaching: Essentials for Becoming a Very Good Teacher* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1998), 15.

	Traditional Schooling	Christian Education
CONTEXT	Schooling or classroom	Community of faith
CONTENT	Text or creed	Person of Jesus Christ
APPROACH	Didactic or instructional	Relational
OUTCOME	Mastery of content	Becoming while in relationship
METHODS	Schooling or laboratory	Relational[27]

Seminary education is certainly Christian education; however, the preceding chart demonstrates how seminary is, primarily, a traditional school. Admittedly, the traditional schooling model used in most seminaries has come to influence the practice and resulting product of many churches. By so doing, churches have joined seminaries in creating students. However, the commission to the church was to make disciples, not students.

Seminary and church leadership positions are arrived at, idealistically, by different paths as well. Seminary leadership positions are filled using established policies and requirements. The *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Faculty Manuel: 1998-1999 Academic Year* begins by describing the eligibility requirements of those who serve as a part of the faculty.

Everett Ferguson has suggested a different norm in the church. Ferguson identified three prerequisites for servant-leadership in the Church: (1) the necessary gifts for doing the work; (2) the use of these gifts in service to others demonstrating that one can and will do the work; and (3) acknowledgment of the leadership and a willingness to follow by the people among whom the work is to be done.[28] Ferguson suggested that, while offices do exist in New Testament churches, they should not be considered official as in the case of an institution. Instead, offices referred to a

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[27]Ibid., 18.

[28]Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 297.

function, a work to be done. Therefore, in the church a task, ministry, or service to be performed constituted an office, not a title or position. Ferguson concluded, "gifts lead to service, and service results in leadership."[29]

Conclusion

Seminaries are, first and foremost, institutions with the denominationally assigned task of higher learning. The church, on the other hand, is a dynamic organism, unique in beginning and end, with the divinely assigned mission of making disciples. Although the seminary community is composed of believers and, therefore, engages in many of the functions of a church, those functions are addressed in ways unlike the local church. Institutionalism is more of a subtle trap to the church, rather than the natural evolution of an organization. Agreeing with the standard that there is room for a seminary to aim for a more idealistic view of an institution, many evangelicals would be reluctant to conclude that the viability of the church of the future rests on the shoulders of the seminary. Most would prefer to lean on the promises of the Lord of the church.

If Implemented, What Are Some Potential Consequences of an Institutional Model of Servant Leadership at NOBTS?

The Model's Answer

Gaines and Register identified at least five positive consequences of implementing an institutional model of servant leadership at NOBTS. Those consequences were a high level of trust, a flattened pyramid, improved achievement of institutional objectives, investment in

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[29]Ibid.

people, and the "cyclical development of servant leaders culminating in the empowerment of the

laity."[30]

Trust

Kouzes and Posner summarized the leadership challenge for the new millennium

with the word "credibility." Of the characteristics that described a credible leader, they placed

supreme value on trust.[31] Gaines and Register suggested that such trust should result in an

environment of partnership between leader and follower. This partnership was further described

as one in which everyone leads and follows.[32]

Such idealism, while inviting, could prove impractical. A popular cliche describes the

paralysis of organizations where everyone leads and follows: too many chiefs, not enough

Indians. In a perfect world, all team members would have the same skills to lead. Trust in that

environment would demand and provide a hearing for all team members. The continuing

legitimacy of such trust would rest on the implementation of ideas generated through the teams.

Overlooking any one of these stages, while articulating their value, could result in the loss of

trust by all.

A Flat Pyramid

Having identified the flattening of leadership pyramids as a consequence of servant

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[30]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 29.

[31]James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How To Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), 28.

[32]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 12.

leadership, Gaines and Register redesigned a pyramid using circles instead of rectangles. The suggested model consisted of six levels of institutional leadership. The use of the word "levels" alluded to a re-created, top-down design. However, all doubt was removed by the description of a process whereby recommendations flowed from leadership teams to the various levels above them and decisions were made by the President, then flowed in reverse order.[33]

There was a related value placed on consensus decision making, a consequence of a truly flat pyramid.[34] However, what determines a consensus? Paul Hare characterized good group decisions as those made "in settings where [all] members are encouraged to consider a diversity of viewpoints, to evaluate the probable effects of various options, and to monitor the effects of their decisions."[35] Good group decision making would prove a time-consuming process.

Kouzes and Posner challenge this consequence by noting, "Leaders must also have the ability to make something happen under conditions of extreme uncertainty and urgency."[36] Leaders who make things happen may not rely heavily on group consensus decision making.

A pure institutional servant leadership model, truly flattening the pyramid, may jeopardize the ability of NOBTS to make swift decisions in a fast-changing culture. However, declaring that the pyramid is flat, while operating as if it is not, sacrifices trust which has been established as foundational to servant leadership.

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[33]Ibid., 24-25.

[34]Ibid., 17.

[35]Paul A. Hare and others, *Small Groups: An Introduction* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 145.

[36]Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 76.

Institutional Objectives

The achievement of institutional objectives in a servant leadership design rests on shared mission, vision, and core values. Greenleaf noted that institutions are "governed best by a shared vision, rather than by the idiosyncrasies of whoever happens to be in power and presumes to lead."[37]

NOBTS has made measurable progress in this area by defining mission, vision, and core values. Faculty employed during the last two years have been asked to determine their degree of support for those items. However many employees (administration, faculty, and staff) as well as customers (students) pre-date these statements and may or may not feel a sense of ownership regarding them.

The current system of faculty evaluation rests almost entirely on the completion of goals established at the beginning of the year, a type of management by objectives. A consequence of the implementation of an institutional model of servant leadership might be the redevelopment of the faculty evaluation procedures so as to demonstrate the sharing of mission, vision, and core values, as well as the development of similar evaluative tools for other employees.

Investment in People

Gaines and Register called on the seminary to put others first. The measure of success in this consequence was investing time in people. The investment of such time was seen as a demonstration of "one's covenant relationship with God, a conviction of divine call, and a

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[37]Greenleaf, *Seeker And Servant*, 237.

commitment to the divine purpose to be like Christ."[38]

The seminary community exists in a time economy. Teaching, preparation, task force and committee assignments, research and writing, local church ministries, and family stretch administrators, faculty, staff, and students to chronological limits. The actual implementation of an institutional model of servant leadership which puts others first would require a revisiting of many of these assignments. In addition to time for intentional renewal, budgets would be directly impacted. Finally, to limit this value to only a few rather than at every point in the organization could result in jealousy and confusion. Thus, NOBTS would have to explore how to fairly offer renewal opportunities for a larger percentage of employees.

<center>A Servant Leadership Cycle</center>

One of the basic assumptions of the developers of TMSL was, by providing a model of servant leadership at the seminary, NOBTS might be instrumental in deploying a similar model to local churches. Joe Seacrist cites a University of Ohio research project designed to impact and measure behavioral changes among plant foremen regarding the ways they treated subordinates. Of particular concern was the effort to persuade them that mutual trust, warmth, and consideration were desirable when dealing with subordinates.

Using classical pre-tests and post-tests, the researchers quantifiably established that the foremen were, after two weeks of sophisticated training programs, sold on those values. However, in effectiveness follow-up, researchers discovered that there were no changes in discernable behavior between the foremen who had completed the training and those who were

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[38]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 11.

not involved. Their conclusion was, "Even though attitudes are changed through persuasive communication, the change is likely to disappear unless supported by a change in the environment."[39]

While NOBTS might be able to provide instructional opportunities and a working model of servant leadership for students, a possible consequence could be that the expectations of churches for their pastors/leaders will prevail over those lessons learned and experienced at the seminary. Churches view pastors/leaders in every way from hired hand, to chaplain, to CEO. New graduates, stepping into their first church positions, are as likely to succumb to the environment as they are to attempt to change that environment to match their values. If the truest measure of success for an institutional model of servant leadership is the cycling of that value to the churches, NOBTS may unfairly conclude that the experiment was unworthy of continuing. Perhaps a greater measure would be to implement a model of servant leadership on the institutional level as an act of obedience to Jesus who said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."[40]

Final Comments

The implementation of an institutional model of servant leadership at NOBTS would require great costs for all involved. Gaines and Register cite Greenleaf's dangers of servant leadership: "dangerous for the natural servant to become a leader, dangerous for the leader to be

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[39]Joe Seacrist, *Changing What Trainees Say Doesn't Always Change What They Do*, in *Adult Learning in Your Classroom* , ed. Philip G. Jones (Minneapolis: Lakewood Brooks, 1982), 125-6.

[40]Jn. 13:15, NIV.

servant first, and dangerous for a follower to insist that he be led by a servant."[41] The questions

raised by this reaction are not intended to suggest that the results would not be worth the

investment. Rather, they are offered to stimulate all involved to avoid the dangers implicit to

such a change.

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[41]Gaines and Register, *Toward a Model of Servant Leadership*, 1.

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