



Essential Traits for Church Leadership¹

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The church is unique. Leadership in the church is in certain ways different from leadership in other situations. Since the church is far more than a human enterprise, the qualities of leadership must be judged against higher standards. Leadership of the church demands both practical and spiritual gifts. Most important, the qualities of godliness and the characteristics of Jesus Christ must be at the center of the traits of leadership that are valued for the church. These special qualities must be at the heart of the criteria for selection and the motives of education for leadership in the church.

Intellectual Mandates. Christianity is essentially the worship of the creator. God has ordained rationality and capability for understanding as basic to the understanding of proper worship. He is honored by his people's efforts to understand his essence, His intentions, his influence in the guidance of history, and the meaning of his relationship to sinful humanity through the salvation provided in Jesus Christ. Education plays a part in the spiritual consciousness that is uniquely Christian. God has mandated a role for parents and for the whole community of faith in the educational development of his people. He has further specified that those who hold special leadership responsibilities should accept responsibility for equipping the whole community. All leaders must participate in service; they have responsibility for identifying and nurturing others who will also arise to take increasing responsibility as leaders. Leadership education, at least in the generic sense, is the essential process of furthering the understandings of what God has said and how his Word applies to the circumstances of life in certain places at certain periods of time. The task of leadership education thus holds together the constancy of the Word, on the one hand, and the changing realities of context and history, on the other.

Traits, Qualities, and Skills of Christian Leadership

Where and how do the attributes, qualities, and skills of Christian leadership develop?

Guidelines from the Scripture.

The Apostle Paul provided lists of qualities and characteristics which were to be used in the selection of leaders for the church. These lists include, by inference, matters of intellect and knowledge, but they are predominantly concerned with attributes of character, social-relational skills, and personality.

Being above reproach; having but one spouse; being temperate, self-controlled, respectable; being hospitable; being able to teach; not drunken, violent, quarrelsome; not being in love with money; being an effective manager of home and children; not being a recent convert or otherwise prone to conceit; having a good reputation even with those outside the fellowship of the faith; not inclined toward

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dishonesty in business relationships; keeping good hold on the truths of the faith, being of clear conscience; being tested through experience and thus gaining a good standing and confidence in their faith in Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 3:1-13, condensed)

Intellectual Competencies. The emphasis on intellectual development, knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and similar matters which are given such a prominent place in formal theological education are in sharp contrast with the biblical guidelines for the selection of leadership in the church. The difference is a matter of emphasis; no one should assert that formal learning and the biblical criteria are always in conflict.

In today's world, much faith is placed in formal schooling. The church has long been among the vanguard in the promoting of formal education, and much good has come from it. But schooling is relatively ineffective in matters of spiritual development and character formation. The presupposition that "the good life" springs from a well-furnished mind is far more Hellenistic than it is Judeo-Christian. At peril, the church persists in its misguided over-confidence in the value of formal theological education.

Socio-Cultural Emphasis. Far more important than academic content and intellectual skills, leaders in the church must learn the perspective of the people of the church. The increasingly complex cultural mix in any local church makes necessary the qualities of leadership that were characteristic of the days of the apostles. The list in 1 Timothy still has validity.

Interpersonal Relational Qualities. Research in Europe and especially in North America has shown that the major shortcomings which cause pastor to leave the ministry relate to rudimentary problems of interpersonal relationships. Competency in dealing effectively with other people must be among the qualities of leadership in the adequately equipped leader.

Skills of Leading People. Leaders of God's people must first be followers of God. Then they need the respect that comes from treating people well and providing encouragement and nurture. The skills of leadership that matter most are an interaction of appropriate skills manifest within the gifts of personality and wisdom that enables leaders to avoid the many pitfalls of egoism and control-seeking.

Questions for Discussion

1. What traits of effective leadership are most important?
2. What traits of effective leadership are often lacking?
3. What should churches do to help in the selection of men and women for leadership education?
4. How can the institutions of formal Christian education increase the effectiveness of their graduates?
5. What are the viewpoints about who should be educated as leaders in the church? (What does *Leader* mean?)

6. In what ways is formal education important to the development of leaders in the churches?
7. How can leaders be helped to develop their skills while remaining in the local community and church?

Aspects of Leadership Development

Leadership is a combination of gifts that God gives to people in order that they may effectively serve the church. This statement is not broad enough to be a definition for all purposes, but within the emphasis intended for this conference on leadership development for the church, it serves very well. Leadership consists of personal-moral-spiritual qualities as well as some specific abilities and talents which are learned. Leadership development (more properly, *leadership education*) is the process of bringing all these things together as appropriate skills and judgments.

Threats to Effective Learning of Leadership. Learning to lead God's people in God's way begins with following God. Christians have searched for procedures and institutions which can provide effective leadership education. Within local churches, leadership skills are developed and the biblical basis for spiritual development is provided in various ways. In special institutions of secondary and higher education, education is provided to those who take formal leadership in the ordained positions of the church.

Here is where a major problem emerges: the scholarly goals of formal education are typically given priority over spiritual concerns. A partial explanation lies in the ancient lore of the school: *Students give more attention to things that they believe will be on the test*. Schooling for leadership in the church must beware of the danger of putting scholarly outcomes ahead of spiritual values. Theological schools are now being warned that churches are often disappointed with the quality of spiritual leadership offered by some of the recent seminary graduates.

A further problem of formal theological education is found in the following observation: *Teachers tend to teach what is easiest to test*. Since spirituality is not easily tested, its importance hardly seems worthy. Instead, all sorts of informational and textual materials related to spirituality are included. This accumulation of information is not, in itself, true spirituality. Instead, this sort of substitution of lists and data tends to divert time and attention from the experiences and spiritual disciplines which build spirituality. The results, in worst cases, are represented by the following misunderstandings:

Misconception 1: Leading is knowing. Living within a constant emphasis on academic learning leads to a narrow worldview. One goes to school in order to become able to lead; the emphasis in school is on knowing. Thus it is easy to come to the conclusion, perhaps consciously, but surely sub-consciously, that these matters of "important to know" are somehow the stuff of competency. So easily then, the person who spends many years in the academic environment in the anticipation of leadership in ministry comes to understand the capacity to lead as a matter of intellectual knowledge.

Misconception 2: Ministry relationships are like formal schooling. Being a student is similar to being a child, especially in that both these situations stimulate the longing to be different--to escape the subordinate role, or better yet, to reverse it. The student role is essentially responsive; the teacher role is usually dominant. Many a seminary graduate moves from the seminary to the church by seizing the chalk and the stick, the symbols of authority in the classroom, and moves them into the church. Pedantic leadership is not apt to be well accepted in the church. The pastor cannot pose as a schoolteacher. The people of God should not be expected to sit quietly in neat rows.

These misguided learnings are easy to criticize; what a wonder that they have so long been accepted with minimal challenge in the church. The early influences of Greco-Roman school architecture and authoritarian hierarchies of leadership have left a profound mark of syncretism on the Christian church. Should the same be said of Confucianism?

What is needed. In reference to the development of leadership for the church, certain ways of organizing learning are more appropriate than others. The most promising ways and means are those that provide the following characteristics:

Learning that is *experiential*.

Learning experience that involves *functional responsibility*.

Engagement with others in contexts and circumstances that allow *long-term engagement*.

Learning within community. Where will these three characteristics be most readily available? Rather than in the solitary and highly individualistic situations so common in the conduct of formal education, the learning of spiritual ministries is most predictably be available within a community of Christian service. Effective development of Christian ministry skills and attitudes is more apt to occur where there is continual interaction with a sector of the community of faith, at least in terms of an accountability relationship with a mentor, or better yet, a mentoring network within a larger circle of the Christian community. A learner needs relationships with others. In light of the scriptural evidences, God intends that learning of the relational skills of leadership should be social experiences rather than individualized solitary encounters with information.

Leaders must develop in wisdom. The learning experiences gained in theological education should move the leader of the church in the direction of wisdom. The distinction between knowledge and wisdom in the biblical *Wisdom Literature* is well reflected in the steps upward from knowledge (as memorized information) to capacity for judgment (evaluation) in the insightful *Taxonomy of Cognitive Outcomes* (1954) by the late Benjamin Bloom (University of Chicago).

Bloom identifies six levels of the use of the human mind. These six levels are represented in a sequence of six upward steps or levels. The importance of each step is reflected in its being part of the enabling of the next step. Each step has worth. Each step demands a more elegant use of the human capacity for complex thought. The well-educated and mature person should be able to operate

appropriately at each of the six levels (depicted below), utilizing all of the earlier levels in effective ways.

6. EVALUATION (the use of well-analyzed and appropriately synthesized ideas as the basis for a judgment--thus, wisdom).
5. SYNTHESIS (the mental task of combining one idea with a relatable other idea and thus making a more thorough third idea).
4. ANALYSIS (the mental task of taking an idea apart, sorting, classifying, and examining its several parts).
3. APPLICATION (capability of putting understood information into action)
2. UNDERSTANDING (to the extent of being able to represent INFORMATION in one's own words).
1. INFORMATION (in the sense of bits of data committed to memory; sometimes called rote learning).

The tests and assignments used in formal theological education show a great emphasis on the first and second levels. Especially when large classes are involved, the tendency is to keep the level of learning very low, partly because of the difficulty of testing at higher levels.

The Dominance of Formal Education. Any conversation or writing about the church's role in education must deal with the fact that fuzzy words tend to confuse the issues. *Educating, teaching, learning, and development* are each important words, but they tend to run together in overlapping and sometimes contradictory ways. One clear example is the heated arguments that rage over the word *training*: For sensitive educators, training is what is done to animals; humans are to be *educated*, not *trained*. Yet we need a simple word that refers to deliberate, specific, and functional teaching; so, in English, we fall back to the word *train* or *training*.

When the way we think about and talk about training or educating is exclusively built on images and ideas from formal education, the possibilities are sharply limited. School-like relationships, environments, assignments, and cognitive outcomes are assumed to be appropriate. The walking-talking-doing activities of deliberate learning through experience are overlooked or downgraded. Nonformal education is thus ignored or seen as invalid learning. Thus the example that Jesus demonstrated with the training of His own disciples is overlooked. The result is leadership education full of tedious and bookish teaching, abstracted from realities of life.

Defining Learning. For John Dewey, learning was "reorganization of experience." Dewey was especially concerned that learning should be understood as an active process within the learner. To learn is not simply to receive information. He also talked of learning as a "representing of experience." (Dewey emphasized it as "representing," referring to the verbal presenting of things conceptualized in the mind).

For Jean Piaget, as well, learning is the "modification of experience by behavior. We learn by doing things—by re-sorting and rearranging the elements of the environment." Those who study learning in the context of actual human experience agree on several points: the meaning of an idea depends heavily on the mental material available from previous experiences and perceptual images. Further,

the process of learning is an active meaning-making activity in which the learner's worldview, biases, personality, and significant others constitute a set of powerful filters through which the new encounter with evidence or idea will be interpreted.

Defining the Three Socio-cultural Contexts of Education. Analysts of education generally differentiate three sorts of educational events, ranging from the highly formalized to the “natural” and ordinary events of living within a culture. The following taxonomy is useful for Christian educators especially as a reminder that the intent of Christian education is to develop the church as a particular kind of environment for whole-person development (socialization), and the mode represented most clearly by the activity of Jesus and by most of the church-community educating down through the church era is *nonformal education*.

Socialization. The ordinary teaching and learning that occurs through interactions with a social context are called socialization. There is no political meaning in this use of the word; it describes what happens when persons live and develop in relationships with each other. Learning “at mother’s knee . . . on the streets . . . from my friends” are some of the ways we talk about socialization. Christian socialization is a desired outcome of Christian education. We strive for families, for communities, for churches in which people influence each other’s development in Godly ways.

Formal Education (Schooling). Teaching and learning that is carried out through the formalized institutions of society, usually schools, is classified as formal education. It always has a structured and ladder-like form; its chain of academic accomplishments provide recognition, status, credentialing, and usually greater wealth.

Nonformal Education. Deliberate teaching and learning, not casual or merely circumstantial, but not linked tightly to the formal social ladder of schooling. Nonformal education usually uses procedures of teaching and learning drawn from the lore and practices of formal education, but it does so with greater flexibility and freedom, generally using experiential learning in preference to classrooms and lectures.

Nonformal Education about Socialization. Deuteronomy 6 is one of the most specific illustrations of Godly purpose of education revealed in the Scriptures. Here nonformal education is used to guide and inform God’s people toward family and community contexts in which God is honored and worshipped. God intends humanity to be shaped into communities and nations which honor him. In Deuteronomy 6, it becomes clear how adults are to conduct themselves in order that younger people will be brought into full participation in the community of faith.

Moving Theological Education to the Streets. Among the most promising possibilities for theological education in the future is the growing awareness that the development of ministry skills and gifts demands extensive participation with many sorts of people within the contexts of their ordinary worlds. Thus nonformal education that emulates many of the characteristics of the coming-and-going of Jesus as teacher is becoming more valued. Theological education of the future very likely will include expansions upon the rudiments of a structured nonformal education as practiced in the BILD idea (Biblical Institute for Leadership Development, Ames, Iowa) and in the important innovations of the Seminary of the East (Dresher, Pennsylvania).

Learning the Social Skills of the Gospel. Certain learnings are of special concern to the Christian community. These concerns are not unique to the church, but for the Christian they represent the social skills that need to be developed in response to the Gospel: compassion, nurture, reconciliation, and hospitality.

Incarnation of the Word—Learning to Walk the Word. The Bible's Hebrew epistemology demands that *knowing*, *wisdom*, and other such terms denoting mental process be understood to imply acting upon, behaving in, and demonstrating *obedience to the truth as the very essence of knowing*. Thus a community of experiencing and sharing persons is the requisite for theological education. It is not enough to *know about* God and the things of God—one must actually *know God*. And to truly know God is to *walk* with God. Thus the line between academic functions (the intellectual processes of learning God's Word) and the nurture of spiritual development must virtually vanish.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you usually think about or talk about when the topic is teaching or learning? (Is our thinking narrowed by the experiences we have with schools and schooling?)
2. What are the most important things that Christians learn in life?
3. What is most important for a Christian to learn about leadership?
4. What is your experience with people who have knowledge in their heads that they do not put into action in their lives?
5. What definitions of *learning* are most common in Taiwan? How can these be reconciled with Christian views of learning? Is there any conflict?
6. How can schools and colleges increase their emphasis on learning that will lead to Christian service in church and in society?
7. How do people learn to walk (act upon, and live out) their Christian learning?

Models of Leadership Development

The Issue of Basic Standards

Determining the quality of any educational activity must begin with purposes. Education without purpose is merely another form of entertainment. Effectiveness of leadership education in and for the church must be determined in reference to the purposes and standards of the fulfillment of Christ's intentions for the church. Thus accreditation, for example, is not adequate if it accounts only for comparisons of institutions against the social and academic standards of universities, colleges, and schools. The ultimate question is too easily overlooked: How well does this education serve the church?

The second major issue for evaluation of leadership education for the church is the matter of who it is designed to accommodate: *Who is the appropriate student?*

Today, leadership education for the church is caught between two extreme views:

1. Leadership education is only for the clergy; or
2. Leadership education is for all Christians.

This contrast is hard to reconcile. Some want to keep clerical education well separated from education for the laity. Others want all of God's people to have the same opportunities.

The narrow view is hard to defend except among the most formal and liturgical fellowships. The broader view leads to many practical problems such as the obvious difficulty of providing such an expensive and time-consuming educational experience for everyone.

The unresolved questions remain: Who needs how much education of what sort? The issue relating to the appropriate level of skill in the use of biblical languages is a particularly trying exemplar of these questions.

Issues of Form. Christians, as people of the Book, should have good answers to the following questions: Where is it written that theological education should be provided in a *school*? Where is it written that a three-year degree, enrolled full-time, after a four-year bachelor's degree is the ideal model? (This is the typical assumption in the United States.)

Where is it written that certain content of curriculum is essential and other content is optional? Where is it written that ideally the student should live on a campus during a course of formal learning experiences? Where is it written that students must be given grades based upon their ability to recall bits of information and that these grades should be considered the basis for honor among the saints?

The Church as a Learning Context

Development of leadership, for the church and for the godly influencing of the larger society, is one of the defining characteristics of the church. An integrated or holistic view of human spirituality leads to a view of the church as being concerned with the whole of human development. Detached souls are not the object of God's redemptive activity.

Seeing the church as a learning context is important for other reasons. The church is a network of communities of God's people. Within these communities people who are born into the kingdom of God through the salvific work of Jesus Christ enter into relationships which are intended to provide nurturance and appropriate stimulus for spiritual development. The Christian is not born full-grown spiritually; a central mission of the church is to provide the context and the resources for the development of God's people.

Historically, the local churches have delegated away certain aspects of their functions and have chosen, sometimes wisely, to establish institutions for the furtherance of specific aspects of their mission. Such institutions are assumed to lead to increased effectiveness through economies of scale. The resulting institutions are often highly regarded as examples of Christian cooperation and inter-congregational unity. Hospitals, schools, colleges, seminaries, and mission boards are the major categories of institutions thus established.

Unfortunately, two negative consequences tend to appear over time: the church can lose its intimate involvement with the delegated parts of its mission, and the institution can take on a deterministic life of its own, with steadily decreasing concern for accountability to the church. The first of these consequences leads to dis-involvement and ultimately to the removal of the delegated mission from the consciousness of the people in the local congregations. The remoteness of the schools of theological education provides one clear example. The training of pastors and other employed leaders in the church is somebody else's responsibility; the church may make direct or indirect contributions, but the extent of influence on the training itself is usually minimal.

The second consequence, the tendency of institutions to take on a life of their own, is clearly seen in the degeneration of colleges and universities, both denominational and independent. The story is not so grim with theological schools. But here a different concern can be raised. Especially among the more aggressive theological schools in the evangelical tradition, the syncretistic cultural theme of independence and autonomy with which Christianity in North America is deeply infected, has led to the easy acceptance of seminaries and Bible colleges which have no clear linkage and accountability to the churches. This matter is rarely discussed, in part because such institutions have proven to be among the more stable and effective in the development of Bible-centered leaders for the church. But they have also played a conspicuous part in the weakening of denominational unity and in the rampant spawning of even more organizations and institutions with minimal accountability to the church.

Limited Images of the Church as a Learning Center. The assertion that the local church itself is a learning center usually calls to mind the programmed educational activities of the church: Sunday school, youth ministries, and Bible study groups, for example. Such programs are maintained by the local church partly because school is the controlling image of teaching and learning. For the people of the church, as for most people in the western world, the school is the efficient place of learning--the learning factory. This imagery accounts for the prominent place given to Sunday *school*, the Vacation Bible *school*, Sunday School Teachers' Training *school*, and for the occasional conference being called a *School of Prophecy*, for example.

The schooling image is the mental starting point for much of the programmed activity of the church. The attendant assumptions fall pathetically short of the functional potentialities of the church as a learning center. Few people stop to consider that far less is learned in school than in the socialization processes of society. The most notable example of the power of socialization processes is the learning of one's first language. Clearly this learning is the most complex and typically well-learned of all life's cognitive and psychomotor tasks, and yet it is well on its way to accomplishment by the age of three

to five years. What a feat! And almost everyone succeeds. School never comes close to such an accomplishment.

Socialization into the Community of the People of God: Clues from Deuteronomy 6. This passage depicts God at work informing the community of faith of its continuing responsibility for building a particular sort of society in which the young and the newcomers will be socialized into a God-consciousness and an awareness of the behavioral dimensions of their responsibilities as Godly persons. The Deuteronomy 6 text is commonly offered as proof of the importance of Christian education. But in this text, as in all other biblical texts on teaching and learning, there is not even a hint about the schooling model. The concern is altogether focused on the nature of a family and a community in which the young will learn their God-consciousness as naturally and persistently as they learn their first language.

Questions for Discussion

1. How can we encourage the people of God to more broadly share responsibilities and tasks of leadership within the church?
2. How can leadership development be more closely related to evangelism and outreach of the church?
3. In the churches you know from your experiences, what are the major spiritual needs?
4. How can our theological schools, colleges, and other educational institutions resist the pressure to conform to secular models of education?
5. Should our schools, colleges, and seminaries give more attention to academic quality or less? Should they give more attention to spiritual values and practices? In what ways should they change?
6. How did Jesus teach His disciples? Why do we call him the “great teacher?”

Models of Leadership Development

The Need for Diversity

Leadership education has never been all of one kind. The Gospels reveal that Jesus varied the learning experiences for his disciples in response to their individual characteristics and in order to make use of various situations. In the years ahead, variations in educational procedures and forms are likely to increase. A greater variety of creative models of leadership education is needed. What is appropriate for one sector of the church should be assumed to be different from what is needed in another. The increasingly global representation of the church makes flexible planning even more urgent.

Anxieties. At the very time that creativity and inventiveness are needed, institutional survival seems to be the major concern. Instead of moving forward into new explorations, the attitude is extremely cautious and traditionalized.

Will our schools survive? How secure are the jobs held by professors and administrators? Any answers must be tentative. Nobody can respond with certainty; but surely in the Western world more schools will be forced into radical change or closure. And in the nations where the churches are emerging in great numbers, dependency on outside financial and personnel assistance is diminishing. Here, too, the future of expensive residential institutions is under a shadow.

Should we ask: Is formal theological education coming to an end? The answer is certainly *no*! Leadership education, formal and nonformal, in one form or another is as old as the Holy Scriptures; it will surely continue. What is less likely to continue is the dominant educational form of the past hundred years or so.

Issues of Purpose. “Preparation for ministry” is a phrase likely to change. Perhaps part of the contemporary misfit between institutions and the churches relates to the antiquated notion that without schooling there is no preparation and without “preparation” there is no ministry. A faulty theological understanding of the church and leadership within the church lies at the bottom of the problem. The church is the people of God; leadership of the church is a matter of shared servanthood in ministry to this community of people. Ministering to and among God’s people is a task for all the saints. Other views usually can be traced to the traditions of the church’s period of domination by hierarchical Roman Catholic polity, governance, and worship.

The Gap Between Leaders and the Community. The clergy-laity dichotomy is perpetuated by certain presumptions of leadership education. While granting that a responsible pastor needs to be skilled in the handling of the Scriptures, his goal should be nothing less than helping the people of the church in their developing this competency for themselves. Pastors who presume to be *above* the people tend to use their educational credentials as a badge of authority, thus adding to the relational distance between themselves and the broader leadership potentialities within the congregation.

Academicism runs rampant among ministry persons in many churches today. People resent being “talked down to.” Pastors who identify more with academic values than with spiritual values are a hindrance to the spiritual development of God’s people.

The Urgency of Change. The church has been able to make fairly good use of the formal education model. It should not be abandoned simply because it is not spelled out in the Bible. The formal model of education was already in use by the time of Jesus’ ministry, and he chose not to use it. Instead he surrounded Himself with learners and moved across the countryside, from village to village to city, teaching in the context of his ministry to needy people. Jesus involved his learners in action from the very beginning of their development as his disciples. His approach startled the more formally educated groups (John 4:1, 2).

Today the formal model is defended almost as vigorously as the Gospel itself. Creative alternatives are rarely sought. When any changes are proposed they are either talked to death in one committee after another or they are rejected because they violate tradition and established habits.

Is it heretical to ask if God might be on the threshold of revealing to the church some fundamentally different way or ways of accomplishing the vital task of leadership development? Surely a defense must be made against destruction of old forms before valid replacements are well attested in the mission of the Gospel, but we should not assume that God's creative hand will continue to reveal itself.

1. Change Forced By Circumstances. Despite shrinking enrollments and financial instability in many schools, especially those without substantial endowments or well-developed ties to growing denominations, the leadership people in theological education seem largely committed to defending traditional institutions and procedures.

A more critical reading of the "handwriting on the wall" suggests that these assumptions are very risky. Without substantial change, a significant number of institutions are likely to find themselves in irreversible difficulty very soon. The unaddressed problems include the following:

The changed and still changing nature of the students enrolled in theological education—They are older, more experienced, more commonly married, and often with children. They have greater financial burdens, they must continue employment, and thus they tend to be part-time students. They often are already engaged in substantial ministry in the churches. They are more diverse in their educational backgrounds. They are more able to discern the value of an educational task, and thus they are more inclined to resist and resent childish assignments and tests of trivial information.

The increasing costs of higher education—In the United States, for example, formal education is forcing out the less well-supported students. The problem is made worse by the relatively poorly-paid positions into which graduates must move if they are to remain in salaried ministry. Academic debt is becoming less manageable.

The changing concerns and needs of churches—Churches and the communities in which they minister are confronted by circumstances hardly imaginable when the categories of the classical theological curriculum were laid down. By merely standing still, practical theology, for example, has become a virtual museum, reminding of a now-lost era when the largest single task of the minister was pulpit oratory. Today's pastors lose their jobs or choose to leave for substantially different reasons: incompetency in dealing with people and the complexities of their real world, ineffective management of church finances, incompetent development of lay leadership, lack of vision, and failure to understand the nature of adult learning and spiritual nurturance.

2. Two-Tier Survival. Theological education may well split into two major sectors: a more academic and higher order of substantially longer programs to satisfy the needs of churches that believe they need leaders with doctoral-level theological education, and a lower tier of institutions serving the vast majority of the churches through a more functionally-oriented and shorter education. The models for each of these two types of schools are already in place.

3. Church-Based Forms. As churches, especially larger churches, become more insightful and more assertive about their own possibilities as educational centers, a return to educational procedures common of earlier centuries may develop. Using internship, coupled to intensive small-group educational experiences, almost any church can become its own source of leadership resources.

4. Responsive Resource Centers. Perhaps the schools of theology can find ways to respond to trends and to become hubs within networks of shared resources. Seminaries and theological schools constitute substantial clusters of human and literary resources. These resources are needed in the cause of leadership development in the church regardless of other eventualities. Fervent prayer should be invested toward the end of effective dialogue and planning among the several sectors of the church and the agencies which were originally conceived as resources for the church.

A Basis for Lifelong Learning

The Christian church has long embraced a lifelong encounter with exposition and application through regular exposure to sermons. Christians assume that there is always more to know; in recent years there seems to be an increasing valuing of the knowing of the things of God.

A Foundation for Continuing Education. The cultural context of the Bible assumes that the progression toward wisdom is a function of maturing across life. “Obeying [incorporating into one’s lifestyle] all things that I have taught you” is the measure of discipleship in Matthew 28. Who can accomplish this full measure in less than a lifetime?

Teaching for Foundation-building. Two contrasting positions are commonly taken by teachers: some assume that anything that the student will ever need to know should be in the formal curriculum. Others assume that trying to anticipate and deal with *everything* within the scope of three or four years of formal theological education is futile. Teachers holding this second position try to find ways to teach the means and procedures by which the student can build a foundation for lifelong learning. By contrast, those holding the first position tend to organize and deliver great quantities of information, often overwhelming students and leading them toward frustration and resentment.

Sustainable Habits. For the leader in the community of faith nothing is more practical than the skill and habit of reasoning theologically. People who cannot or will not think in God-centered abstractions and theoretical constructs are seriously under-educated. Tragically, it is possible to hold a theology degree without having built the habits of thinking theologically. Academic theology, whatever its form, should be held accountable for helping theology students develop sustainable habits of reasoning and thought, not just demonstrating great stunts and exhibitions of memory and words. Consider the following habits:

1. *Reading.* The ways to use books and other print media will continue to be an important part of leadership education. Reading is a highly efficient and fairly precise way to get in touch with what the experiences of others have taught them. Reading also provides one of the important avenues

through which one's perspectives are broadened. If academic reading is altogether guided by and ultimately limited by a formal bibliography, the habits of inquiry will, at best, be only partially formed.

2. *Dialogue.* Among Christians, dialogue is an enriching and fulfilling part of the learning process. Through dialogue we not only hear other ways of expressing ideas and gain insights through others' perceptions, but we gain facility and confidence in the organizing and expressing of our own understandings. One of the best arguments that can be made in support of residential study is the deeper quality of dialogue that it can encourage—assuming that the academic environment is used for that purpose. Further, even as the Apostle Paul demonstrated in several new situations, notably Athens, dialogue concerning people's culture, religious presuppositions, and worldview is a basic necessity for effective evangelization.

3. *Language learning.* Surely all those who lead in the house of God can benefit from familiarity with the underlying meanings of the biblical texts in order to judge important issues of doctrine. But to argue the absolute necessity of this competency in biblical languages for everyone who accepts responsibility for some aspect of leadership within the church seems unrealistic and unnecessary. Just as surely, it seems reasonable to argue that multi-year advanced degrees should give substantial attention to Greek and Hebrew as well as becoming bilingual in some second major world-class language as well. Ministry in the years ahead is surely going to be more rewarding for those who can help to bridge the linguistic gaps that are becoming ever more problematic in the modernized world. And the threats of syncretism, quasi-Christian cults, and universalism are apt to demand responsible Biblical exegesis to a greater extent than ever.

4. *Culture learning.* Leaders in the church carry an increasing challenge of helping the people of God learn within the church the rudiments of intercultural reconciliation. The model in Acts 6 is more important with every passing year. Leaders must be good culture learners and effective teachers of culture learning.

Relating Gifts and Ministry. Across one's life God provides more gifts as needed for the ministry of the church. The leader must continually reassess the needs of the ministry, prayerfully seek the intervention and blessing of God for appropriate response, accept the need for developing in new ways and moving forward as the servant of the creative God.

The Skills of Self-Assessment and Planning. Leadership education should be strong in the development of self-understanding and planning. Systematic and dedicated self-assessment should be a mark of the responsible leader. Many of these skills are appropriately developed within the context of planning. The leader should continue across life to gain skill in thorough self-assessment and the interlocking of understandings thus derived with the on-going planning of ministry tasks and functions.

Lifelong Spiritual Development. For Christians, nothing is more important than the spiritual essence or center core of human personhood. From this spiritual core of the person the ministries of the Spirit of God are transmuted into social action. The spirituality of a person is both receiver and fountain: receiver, in the sense that the New Birth activates the human spirituality otherwise dead in

sin, and also receiver in that the Word, God's spirit indwelling, and the myriad ministries within the community of faith all come to reside in one's spiritual reality. But a person's spirituality is also a fountain, a source fulfilling the intentions and realities of its own sources. Spirituality is reflected in worship, a fountain of responsiveness to God's holiness; it is reflected in the humility of a Christ-like walk of life, extending into the good works of life as the evidences of faith (as emphasized in James).

Lifelong Nurture and Continuing Maturation of Faith. From an educational viewpoint, spirituality, and especially the experiences, activities, meditations, and studies that nurture spiritual essence of human life can be conceptualized as a three-sided space. Every Christian needs to be nurtured from each of the three corners, each representing the sources of maturing spirituality:

1) *Learning from the Book* in order to know what God has said about the spiritual life and the ways in which Christian spirituality is nurtured by the Word and by God's Spirit, himself.

2) *Meditation upon the Person and Work of Christ* has always been appreciated by those who see the importance of prayer and fasting. This focus on the person of Christ and the majesty of God has its place in spiritual nurturance.

3) *Doing the Works of Godly Justice* connects the biblical materials to the ministries of Christian help and witness in an unjust world. For many evangelicals the re-discovery of the Epistle of James and the awakening of social consciousness has led to the recognition of the powerful effect that applied ministry and the works of the Gospel have in the life of the spiritually maturing believer.

The leader among the people of God must be committed to a lifelong spiritual development in which some sort of appropriate relationship among these three nurturant experiences is discovered and maintained. Stewardship of life, its spirituality, mission, and resources is an appropriate response to the grace of God shown through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What innovations and improvements in leadership development are we already seeing in our churches and institutions?
2. What leadership competencies and skills are most commonly lacking in new pastors?
3. Are new forms of leadership education possible within Taiwan? What more can be done by the individual churches to encourage a broader participation in leadership?
4. How could older pastors be of more help to newer pastors?
5. How could we assure that a greater portion of those who engage in studies in our schools, college, and seminaries will actually commit themselves to ministry services in and for the church?