Exploring the Gifts Among Us

General Assembly 2008

Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley

Rev. Nancy Bowen

The Leadership Challenge

♦ Emphasis on lay authority has not translated into empowered lay leadership

♦ Chronic difficulty in recruiting lay volunteers

♦ Few models of lay leadership training

♦ Leaders get burned out and disrespected

♦ Difficulty in knowing "who's in charge"

Another Leadership Model

S Generative Leadership is characterized by:

Making meaning of the past: learn lessons, shape the story, sense-making

Reframing problems and opportunities:

Decide on what to decide: raise introspective questions, consider hypotheticals

Discover emergent strategies: suspend logic,

Promote robust discourse: confer, review actions to uncover goals

Richard Chait, Governance as Leadership

Assumptions

◊ Leadership Development invites one to consider what is fulfilling rather than "fill the slot"

◊ Leadership development is engaged at every level of congregational life

◊ Leadership should be fulfilling not exhausting - people should be able to grow spiritually

◊ We have to rethink the "work" of the church

Congregational Assessment

- How many members?

- What percentage of members are actively involved in leadership?   Actively engaged in ministry/programs?

- What are previous leaders doing in the congregation now?

- Do your leaders know what is expected of them? What is?

- Are people happily stepping forward into leadership?

- What are the rewards of leadership in your congregation?

Culture Shifts

⬧ Can't take for granted that we know what the "work of the church" is.

⬧ Consider the different mind sets brought by different generations

⬧ Shift from "atom" to "bit"

⬧ From "religion" to "spirituality"

Generational Perspectives

- Our Church Elders: Everything is a War, people do their duty.

- Baby Boomers: Everything is a Movement, everyone is involved in spontaneous work.

- The Youngers: Everything is a Store, things should be excellent and prepared.

- The Multi-taskers: Everything is complex but can be simplified, looking for connection beyond the technology.

Bridging the Gaps

- Different understanding of responsibilities of membership

- Not just an attitude; a worldview

- Generational values are not easily negotiated

- Multi-modal church is scary, *and healthy*

- If we didn't have new generations we would have no future

- If we didn't have older generations we wouldn't have any tradition

Impediments

- "We've always done it this way"

- "What if the work doesn't get done"

- Don't know a different way

- Letting go of control

- Trusting a new generation

- Over-functioning

Exercise

Describe an experience in your congregation when leadership felt exciting, energizing and rewarding.

What about this experience made it so memorable?

What can you do to encourage more of these experiences for yourself and others?

Culture Change Requires Language Change

- From "recruit" to "invite"

- From "delegate" to "share the ministry"

- From "volunteer" to "serve"

- From "Committee" to "Team"

- From "Goods & Services Institution" to "servant leadership"

Implications for Leaders - Credibility

♦ Clarity of direction

♦ Character

♦ Competence

Implications for Leaders - Context

♦ Different contexts call for different kinds of leadership

Welcoming a new minister

Building or expanding a church facility

Experiencing rapid membership growth

♦ No such thing as one "superleader" for all contexts

Implications for Leaders - Legacy

- The mark of a leader is the capacity to encourage more leaders

- "Not to develop others in leadership while involving them in ministry is to use and ultimately abuse them"

- Difference between fulfilling a task and developing a leader

Empowerment

Defined:

Empowerment is the intentional transfer of authority to an emerging leader within specified boundaries from an established leader who maintains responsibility for the ministry.

Building Leaders, Aubrey Malphurs & Will Mancini

What Empowerment is Not

- Directing: Leader keeps both authority and responsibility

- Abdicating: Leader gives away both authority and responsibility

- Disabling: Leader gives away responsibility but keeps authority

Spiritual Disciplines of Empowerment

- From control to faith (embracing uncertainty) -- empowerment increases the possibility of unknown outcomes

- From expediency to patience -- requires a sacrifice of short-term efficiency to gain greater depth of meaning and connection

Spiritual Disciplines of Empowerment

- From power to humility -- empowerment requires giving up something *even when you are successful at it*

- From isolation to love -- empowerment necessitates close support and authentic community

What is your spiritual discipline?

Congregational Dynamic	Reactive Desire	New Goal	Discipline
Unknown possibilities	Control	Embrace the uncertainty	Have faith in the possible
Sacrifice short-term efficiency	Expediency	Slow down now to speed up later	Patience
Giving away personal authority	Power	Starve your ego	Let go/ share
Necessities of community building	Isolation	Connect with others	Love

Moving from entitlement to empowerment

- What can you do to shift the leadership emphasis from meeting perceived needs to fulfilling the mission of the congregation?

- What can you do to shift the focus from "What I receive" to "What I offer"?

- What can you do to encourage the sense of "a people drawn into community to serve one another and the world"?

Implications for Staff

- Much greater need for increased number of staff - release volunteers to do the work they love

- Everyone is responsible, but best if one person coordinates - "facilitator of equipping ministry"

- Stay informed, but let go of control

Methods of Leadership Development

- Conversation, conversation, conversation!

- Surveys, interest forms, etc. only helpful as documentation, not solicitation

- Based on how members are called to serve, not on what the organization wants.

Methods, cont'd

- Connect - interview and assess
  - Discovery: Gifts, talents, temperament, life experience, and passions
  - Matching and Placement

- Equip
  - Training, feedback, affirmation & evaluation
  - Recognition and reflection
  - Centralized and decentralized

- Support

Your Leadership Legacy

- A congregation that leads from its gifts rather than from its "shoulds"

- An empowered, self aware, spiritually attuned group of leaders

- An atmosphere where people feel honored for their contributions, and know it's "not about me". It is about mission.

Resources

♦ Bass, Richard, ed. *Leadership in Congregations.* Herndon, VI: Alban Institute, 2007.

♦ Chait, Richard, William P. Ryan & Barbara E. Taylor. *Governance as Leadership.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2005.

♦ Galford, Robert M. & Regina Fazio. *Your Leadership Legacy.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006.

♦ Heifetz, Ronald & Marty Linsky. *Leadership on the Line.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002.

Resources, cont'd

⬧ Lencioni, Patrick. *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006.

⬧ Mallory, Sue & Brad Smith. *The Equipping Church Handbook.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Press, 2001.

⬧ Malphurs, Aubrey & Will Mancini. *Building Leaders.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.

⬧ Olsen, Charles M. & Ellen Morseth. *Selecting Church Leaders.* Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2002.

Resources, cont'd

♦ Rendle, Gil. *The Multigenerational Congregation: Meeting the Leadership Challenge.* Alban Institute, 2002,

♦ Steele, Elizabeth *How Responding to People's Needs Hurts the Church,* article in Congregations, the Alban Institute magazine, Spring 2008. (on the current confusion between needs and wants)