

Part III—Ministerial Leadership

20. Core Values of Leaders

Core values in any organization are those elements which are considered essential and foundational to that organization. These core values provide the foundation from which leaders provide their leadership. Because an organization's identity is grounded and rooted in these elements, identifying core values is an essential and first step in establishing organizational goals and objectives. Goals and objectives provide direction for a course of action, but values inform those goals and objectives as to their “rightness” and alignment with the identity of the organization. Effective leaders in the church must have a thorough understanding of the church's core values and constantly ask themselves how those values are being integrated into the ministry they are leading.

Discussing the general concept of core values may be less difficult than identifying the specific values for several reasons. Members may have different understandings of what should be considered core values of the church, and in one sense that has become something we have valued in the church: diversity of thought. Any time a list is developed, such as a list of values, there is always a sense of struggle which may come partially from the belief that God will continue to speak to us giving us new insights and understandings. Therefore, for these and other reasons it would be difficult to declare any given list as the final and exhaustive list. However, there are certain elements over the years that have shaped our faith community. These core values have served as anchors as well as guidance for leaders to explore beyond their current understandings of God's call.

A. Focus on the Centrality of Jesus Christ

I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.

—John 10:10

Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection are at the very center of our faith community. We teach, preach, and sing about all of those significant aspects of Jesus. However, as leaders the portrayal of the centrality of Jesus must go beyond the classroom, the pulpit, and our hymnody. Our world is a much different world than the one in which Jesus lived and gave ministry, and circumstances in the world will continue to change with every generation. Leaders of the church must continue to find ways to help the church be shaped by those principles of Jesus in every generation and circumstance.

Those shaping principles include the development of relationships. It was clear from the beginning of his ministry that Jesus was intent on helping persons be free to participate in a new relationship with God and with each other. These ways of relating to each other and God

evolved into a community of love, acceptance, and equality. We hold the significance of community as a core value from Jesus' teachings.

The worth of persons was another significant shaping principle in Jesus' ministry. Story after story illustrates his desire to help persons know they are loved, that they have value and are of worth. We value how Jesus recognized the worth of all persons, brought freedom into their lives, and helped them see new opportunities. Leaders of the church are called to be engaged in upholding the worth of all persons and helping establish communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

B. The Significance of Community

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. —Doctrines and Covenants 161:3c

Our journey as a faith tradition reflects how deeply we value the concept of community. Throughout our history our church has responded to the call to build community in a variety of ways and places. For any community to sustain itself and grow there must be a strong sense of belonging among its members. In the church this sense of belonging means belonging to and being accountable to each other and to God. Community also means having the opportunity to share in ways that are mutually beneficial. Leaders have a significant role in helping provide the types of environments which are conducive to the concept of belonging, environments where people are cared for, nurtured, invited and empowered to grow. In these communities people have the opportunity to realize they have been claimed by God's love. Leaders must find ways in word and deed which point to Jesus' ministry of calling persons into new relationships. They are called to encourage congregations to include community building as one of their primary goals. These leaders will demonstrate an attitude of inclusiveness. Leaders who understand the significance of community will help congregations reach across cultural and ethnic lines to form communities which are diverse.

Leading people into these types of communities requires leaders who have a deep compassion for and value the worth of all persons.

C. Value the Worth of Persons

Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God...

—Doctrines and Covenants 16:3c

We live in a world where some people are treated with little worth and respect while others are highly valued

and respected. However, the totality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ was not for any select group but was and is for all persons. In so many of the New Testament stories we find Jesus associating with those who were on the fringes of society: people who had little worth or value in others' eyes, and those who were marginalized in many ways. In those stories Jesus was attempting to make clear to his followers that all people have equal access to God's grace and that no one should be treated as a second-class citizen. It is incumbent upon leaders to affirm the worth of all people and assist congregations to become inclusive communities where all are invited to share equally in the fellowship of that community.

D. The Proclamation of Peace

Become a people of the Temple—those who see violence but proclaim peace, who feel conflict yet extend the hand of reconciliation, who encounter broken spirits and find pathways for healing. —Doctrine and Covenants 161:2a

Certainly at the core of our movement has been the desire to participate in God's peaceable kingdom, Zion. One of our primary challenges is to be on a journey toward that peaceable kingdom. This challenge calls us to understand that the journey toward peace is both inward and outward. Effective leaders will be engaged in personal spiritual practices that enhance their understanding of God's reconciling peace. These leaders are also challenged to call others to this inward and outward journey. In response to this core value, leaders must assist others in identifying disciplines which will assist them in finding personal peace. Leaders also have the responsibility to point out injustices in our communities and help members develop and implement activities that will bring peace and wholeness into those situations. Those congregations and leaders who are effectively engaged in identifying brokenness and pointing to pathways of healing will often be responding to a vision of wholeness and peace.

E. Sense of Prophetic Vision

Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. —Doctrine and Covenants 161:1a

From the inception of this faith movement, we have valued the interaction of the Divine with us. From that initial experience when God spoke in a grove until today in settings much different, we still anticipate God calling us to new visions and new understandings. This sense of vision is manifest in multiple ways in our faith community. From time to time the entire community is called forth through prophetic counsel from the president and prophet of the church. There are other times when local leaders are prompted by the Holy Spirit to see specific ministerial potential in individuals, and many times those same individuals are sensing a new and expanded vision in their own discipleship. However, prophetic vision includes more than callings to particular ministerial roles. Leaders have the responsibility of being ministers of vision in ways that call congregations to new and sometimes uncharted fields of ministry. Leaders who have fully grasped this core value live in a spirit of hope and expectancy, leading with a spirit of anticipation.

F. Ministerial Skills Development

...[S]eek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning even by study, and also by faith.

—Doctrine and Covenants 85:36a

Life-long learning and ministerial skill development are valued within our community. Our hope to remain viable and responsive to opportunities and challenges requires us to be engaged in educational and training activities that will enhance our abilities to seize those opportunities and challenges.

People participate in educational activities to enhance their knowledge on a given subject. However, any effective educational pursuit should not only help the learner better understand a given subject but also provide them with the tools to consider new concepts and ideas. Leaders have the responsibility to encourage members to be engaged in personal study as well provide environments of learning/training in which individuals can experience a variety of ideas and interpretations. Group educational activities could include, but would not be limited to, Temple School classes, Congregational Leaders Workshop, seminary, and skills workshops facilitated by people who specialize in a particular field of ministry. It has been said that knowledge is power. Leaders can help empower members and congregations for mission through educational and training activities.

21. Spiritual Formation for Administrators and Leaders

“For God beholds
With His merciful eyes
Not what you are,
Nor what you have been—
But what you will be.”
—*The Cloud of Unknowing*

What Is Spiritual Formation?

Spiritual formation is the practice of spiritual disciplines that invite the presence of the Holy Spirit to be with the practitioner for the purpose of growing in his or her ability to lead a Christ-centered life. Through these disciplines the individual will become more familiar and intimate with God/Christ and more familiar and intimate with self. The spiritual disciplines could be prayer and its various forms, the study of scripture, tradition and the mystics of the Christian faith, meditation, silence, simplicity, service, and others.

As you practice these disciplines you may come to know God in new and exciting ways. You may be more aware of God's presence in all things and experience moments of uninvited grace and peace. Appreciation may be felt at a deeper level for all the blessings that you have and are experiencing through Christ. As you awaken to these new insights they may bring you comfort and assurance but they may also bring to you an awareness of behaviors, habits, relationships, or issues in your life that have become barriers or blocks to becoming closer to God. Confronting the barriers or blocks is important in moving forward on your spiritual journey. As you go deeper in the journey and confront these issues you may want to participate in spiritual direction, a Covenant Discipleship Group, or study group.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a spiritual teacher of the early Christian faith, had a simple assessment for students who desired to study with him. He would ask two questions: What things in my life draw me closer to God? What things in my life draw me away from God? Each of us can make the two lists and work on enhancing those things in our lives that draw us closer to God and work on diminishing or eliminating those things that draw us away from God. In this process we will experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and we will change, first from within and then the change will be expressed on the outside in our service. “Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple” (D. and C. 161:3d).

An important element of spiritual formation is the practice of surrender. In Western culture a person is often measured by how much the individual can accomplish, how many tasks he or she can check off in a short amount of time. Western culture is driven by the concept of the self-

made individual making his or her own way by personal willpower (willfulness). Spiritual formation asks us to be still and listen, to surrender to the One who is greater than all and discern what the will of God is for us as a disciple (willingness). There is a natural tension in our society between the sacred and secular, between the concepts of “willingness” and “willfulness.” Gerald May in his book *Will and Spirit* addresses this tension by saying that

willingness implies a surrendering of one's self-separateness, an entering-into, an immersion in the deepest processes of life itself. It is a realization that one already is a part of some ultimate cosmic process and it is a commitment to participation in that process. In contrast, willfulness is the setting of oneself apart from the fundamental essence of life in an attempt to master, direct, control, or otherwise manipulate existence. More simply, willingness is saying yes to the mystery of being alive in each moment. Willfulness is saying no, or perhaps more commonly, “Yes, but...”¹

If one of our core beliefs is being a Christ-centered community, then it is through willingness and surrender that we allow Christ to be the center instead of ourselves.

All tasks for the administrator should be approached prayerfully with an openness to God's influence through the Holy Spirit. Church administration has many tasks that are routine: planning the calendar, organizing events, recruiting individuals for certain tasks, overseeing the creation of directories, developing leadership, and many others. As routine as these tasks may appear, each task contributes to the overall vision and mission of the jurisdiction. The development of vision and mission is usually accomplished with group participation in the prayerful inquiry and discernment of how the jurisdiction will live out the gospel. An administrator who is not engaged in spiritual disciplines will have a difficult time engaging others in the spiritual tasks of vision and mission.

Discernment

“Discernment comes from the Latin word *discernere*, which means ‘to separate, to distinguish, to determine, to sort out.’” In classical spirituality, discernment means identifying what spirit is at work in a situation: the Spirit of God or some other spirit. Discernment is sifting through our interior and exterior experiences to determine their origin. Discernment helps a person understand the source of a call, to whom it is directed, its content, and what response is appropriate. Discernment also involves learning if one is dodging a call, is deaf to a call, or is rejecting a call.² In spiritual formation the question may be, *whose voice am I hearing in my discernment? Is it mine? Is it my ego's? Is it my woundedness? Is it my anger? Is it the Holy Spirit?* To find the answers to these

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questions requires prayerful inquiry and holy listening. Administrators who build time into their daily routine for prayerful inquiry and holy listening will be blessed with wisdom, insight, assurance, and direction. “Zionic conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies” (D. and C. 140:5c).

Resources

Web pages:

www.shalem.org The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation

www.Anamchara.com/sfo-index.htm Spiritual Formation Online

www.upperroom.org/academy The Academy of Spiritual Formation

www.spiritualityhealth.com Rule of Life

www.Google.com Spiritual Formation (many resources)

Books:

Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community. Suzanne G. Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse Publishing, 1991. ISBN 0-8192-1563-5.

Faithful Listening: Discernment for Everyday Life. Joan Mueller, PhD. Kansas City, Missouri: Sheed and Ward, 1996. ISBN 1-55612-900-9.

Will and Spirit: A Contemporary Psychology. Gerald G. May, M.D. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1982. ISBN 0-0625-0582-3.

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. Richard J. Foster. New York: Harper & Row, 1978. ISBN 0-06-0628-316.

Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life. Marjorie J. Thompson. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. ISBN 0-6642-5548-5.

Living in God's Embrace: The Practice of Spiritual Intimacy. Michael Fonseca. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8779-3939-X.

Notes

1. Gerald May, “Willingness and Willfulness,” *Will and Spirit* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982), 6.
2. Suzanne G. Farnham, et al., “What Is Discernment,” *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse Publishing, 1991), 23.

22. Mission and Discipleship of Witnessing

The Community of Christ mission statement is “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.” Responding to our stated mission compels us to witness and share the good news of God’s grace with all people. This call is central to followers of Christ who acknowledge our great commission found in scripture:

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.—Luke 24:45-48 NRSV

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.—Matthew 28:19-20 NRSV

Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all... Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3a, c

We share our witness because we believe in the gospel and understand that discipleship is our response to grace. Witnessing and sharing the gospel with others is a lifestyle imperative that blossoms in response to the joy found through living the gospel in our daily life. The spiritual discipline of witnessing emerges from recognizing our connection with, and responsibility to, all of God’s creation, including all peoples of the world. We are called to participate in establishing the vision of God’s peaceable reign.

Personal witnessing is a process of sharing a testimony to invite someone to experience the joy of encountering God in a faith community. We invite others to experience a new life of reconciliation, meaning, purpose, joy, hope, love, and peace. Our witness of God’s grace encourages people to enter into sound relationships—with God, others, and self. Sound relationships provide balance and harmony in our existence. Affirmation of the worth of all people as God’s creation calls us to uphold the value of each person and all of life. We witness to others this good news message of God’s grace, and we celebrate our blessing through worship, the giving of self to God. Our faith community enables us to discover and actualize our potential to love and become co-creators in our world with God.

Effective ministerial leaders continually challenge themselves and others to engage in the mission and discipleship

of witnessing. As followers of Christ, sharing our witness is not an option on a list of possible responses; it is at the core of our identity and being. All activities and programs of faith communities should be planned and viewed through the lens of personal witness and invitation to others. Ministerial

leaders are called to emphasize this essence of discipleship by demonstrating it in their lives. Effective leaders demonstrate God's grace in their relationships and invite family, friends, acquaintances, and casual contacts to respond to, and participate in, the divine calling of discipleship.

23. Stewardship

There are many lives waiting to hear the redeeming words of the gospel, or to be lifted from hopelessness by the hands of loving servants. But they will be lost to you without the generous response of disciples who share from their own bounty that others may know the joys of the kingdom.

Many are fearful and believe their security is to be found in the accumulation of possessions. The answers you seek are not inherent in the things of this world but in a faith that places its trust in the promises given to all who would follow Jesus Christ.

You have been given the principles of generosity, rightly interpreted for a new time. These principles call every disciple to tithe faithfully in accordance with means and capacity. Those values, deeply rooted in the Restoration faith, affirm that stewardship and discipleship cannot be divided and are dependent upon each other.

The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls to the far-flung places where the church must go. Each disciple needs a spiritual home. You are called to build that home and care for it, but also to share equally in the outreaching ministries of the church. In that way the gospel may be sent to other souls also yearning for a spiritual resting place.

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:7a-d

Stewardship is a principle that is deeply rooted in scripture and in the Community of Christ tradition. Within months of the formation of the church, Joseph Smith gave a revelation to the church stating, “all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal...” (D. and C. 28:9a). With this revelation in September 1830, “Joseph Smith announced doctrines that prepared the way for his faith to go well beyond the traditional call to charitable giving common among most religions.”¹

Unlike some earlier Christians who had concluded that the physical is evil and the spiritual is good, Joseph Smith Jr. denied this categorization, which resulted in the separation of the physical and the spiritual. He saw them both as matter and as having the potential for good. Over time we have come to understand this statement to mean that spirit and matter are complementary. All matter—spiritual and physical—should be used for God's purposes. Thus, as people living in a physical world, we are called to care for this physical world in a way that glorifies God while proclaiming Jesus Christ and promoting communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

Embracing the connection between the spiritual and the physical does not guarantee generosity or Christ-like stewardship. In fact, valuing material things can lead directly

to staunch materialism. Because “every aspect of the life of the church and its members is a theological testimony...our faith is at once a gift of God and a human response; theology is an integral part of that human response.”² As such, if we are to walk the path of the disciple and learn what it means to answer the call to respond as generous disciples, then the theological testimony of those who have financial resources must be a testimony of generosity. Continued study of stewardship as it is understood through the scriptures is a critical part of our discipleship.

A famous German bishop, Hanns Lilje, commented on his observation of the role of stewardship in the American churches a decade after World War II:

To know that with all that we are and all that we have we are God's stewards is the answer to a particularly deep yearning of the time in which we live, namely, the yearning for a *vita nova*, a complete renewal of our life. Here the insights of our American brethren in the faith have, in perspective of church history, something like the same significance as the lessons which the German Lutheran Reformation has taught us about justification by grace, or the Brethren of the Common Life about the unity of God's children.³

Scripture guides us. “Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son and is required alike of all those who seek to build the kingdom” (D. and C. 147:5a). As disciples, we understand our stewardship of time, giftedness, and resources as our response to God's gifts of grace and love expressed to us in the life of Jesus Christ. Our stewardship is a personal response to God.

Although stewardship is a historic principle, we must continually find ways to live it out in new ways within our cultures. It meets the needs of a growing church ministry, locally and globally.

[S]eek ways of effecting a greater understanding of the meaning of the stewardship of temporalities as a response to my grace and love so that the understanding of the principle may stir the hearts of the people as never before.... to the end that the people may come to provide more fully and joyfully for the great work to which all are called. —D. and C. 154:5

The Community of Christ's Faith and Belief statement on stewardship states the following:

All things were created by God and should be used for God's purposes. Stewardship is the wise management of gifts and resources to enrich personal, family, congregational, and community life, as well as utilizing natural resources for the good of all creation.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we accept responsibility to be good stewards sharing generously with others. Our sharing is in response to the gift of God's love for every person. We share our witness of Jesus Christ and our resources. Sharing with others acknowledges that all we have and are is a gift from God to us. Sharing our witness tells others what Jesus Christ and the church mean to us.

Receiving First

Part of our witness as disciples is sharing the news of God's great generosity. God provides "enough and to spare" (D. and C. 101:2f). God shares in abundance, "good measure, pressed down...shaken together, and running over" (D. and C. 154:6). All that we have and all that we are is a priceless gift to us from God. What then is our response as disciples of Jesus Christ? In simple terms, we respond with thankfulness and share with others as generously as God has shared with us.

Scripture guides us in our discipleship: "Stewardship is the response of my people to the ministry of my Son and is required alike of all those who seek to build the kingdom" (D. and C. 147:5a). All things were created by God and are to be used for God's purposes. As disciples of Christ, we explore the scriptures to understand our stewardship of time, giftedness, and financial resources in response to God's grace and love expressed to us in the life of Jesus Christ. Our stewardship is

- a personal response to God's grace and love;
- a means to meet the needs of a growing church; and
- a way to provide more fully and joyfully for Christ-like service and ministry, locally and globally.

Agency is one of the generous gifts God gives to us. Agency is our ability to choose freely how we respond to God's infinite love and grace. Using our agency wisely allows us to manage our time, giftedness, and resources to benefit our personal, family, congregational, and community life. More specifically, our stewardship of financial resources defines the extent we can generously share, wisely save, and responsibly spend. The following six principles of A Disciple's Generous Response guide us in living out our stewardship of resources:

1. A disciple practices generosity as a spiritual discipline in response to God's grace and love.
2. A disciple is faithful in response to Christ's ministry.
3. A disciple's financial response, while unique to individual circumstances, expresses love of God, neighbor, creation, and oneself.
4. A disciple shares generously through tithing so that others may experience God's generosity.
5. A disciple saves wisely in order to create a better tomorrow for self, family, the church's mission, and the world.

6. A disciple spends responsibly as a commitment to live in health and harmony with God and the world.

Sharing Generously

Tithing is a concept deeply rooted in our scriptures. It is our gift to God in response to God's generous gifts of grace and love to us. Generosity comes from a spirit of thankfulness within us, not from imposed formulas and rules. We share what we have because we want to. We share what we receive first from God. Therefore, a disciple asks, "How much tithing can I hope to share?" rather than, "How much should I give?"

Tithing is based on the biblical principle of sharing our firstfruits with God. This means tithing is the disciple's response of thanksgiving and is given before we spend or save from our income. In the Bible the word "tithes" means a tenth part of what one owns or receives. Tithing, according to scriptural principles, is the act of sharing 10 percent of our income with God. As disciples we honor what we have received from God by reaching toward sharing 10 percent or more through Mission and Community Tithes. "Let whoever is of a generous heart bring the Lord's offering" (Exodus 35:5 NRSV).

Sharing through Mission Tithes

Our Mission Tithes go primarily to World and Congregation Ministries. Through them we support world and local missions that fulfill the following scripture: "Let the truths of my gospel be proclaimed as widely and as far as the dedication of the Saints, especially through the exercise of their temporal stewardship, will allow" (D. and C. 153:9a). Mission Tithes are a significant portion of a generous disciple's response. By sharing equally with Congregation and World Ministries, the disciple shares in the mission of the church both on a local and global level. Examples of Mission Tithes include Congregation Ministries, Mission Center Ministries, World Ministries, Oblation, World Hunger, and other designated church funds.

Disciples generally give Mission Tithes during worship services. In a person's home congregation, offering envelopes can be requested from your congregational financial officer (CFO). Offering envelopes allow funds to be designated for World Ministries and Congregation Ministries, as well as give to other funds such as the Building Fund or Oblation Fund. Additionally, some disciples share through direct contributions sent to World Church headquarters. Estate and financial planning ministers at World Church headquarters are also available, on request, to provide assistance in planning other ways to share Mission and Community Tithes.

Sharing through Community Tithes

Community Tithes are a disciple's response to church-affiliated organizations and other charitable nonprofit organi-

zations that are “in the forefront...recognizing the worth of persons and are committed to bringing the ministry of my Son to bear on their lives” (D. and C. 151:9). Generous disciples may share a portion of their tithing directly with institutions such as Graceland University, Outreach International, Outreach Europe, Restoration Trail Foundation, SaintsCare, World Accord, and other charitable nonprofit organizations.

Save for the Future

The principle of saving is an expression of hope for the future. Disciples save in order to create a better tomorrow for themselves, their heirs, the church, and the world. Through planning and careful management, many have found that saving at least 10 percent of their income is an effective way to prepare for the future. “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it?” (Luke 14:28 NRSV). Disciples save for a number of reasons: major purchases, unexpected needs, vacations, retirement funds, college funds, and estate building for family and church. Indeed, disciples can continue their generous response beyond this life by making provisions in their estates for the ongoing ministries of the church.

Spend Responsibly

The principle of spending responsibly is a commitment by disciples to use the remainder of their income to live in health and harmony as they support family, personal needs, giftedness, and interests. Wise and prayerful planning and management of these remaining resources brings financial wholeness in life. How we spend our money is part of our personal witness of Christ. “It is incumbent upon the Saints...to be in the world but not of it, living and acting

honestly and honorably before God and in the sight of all men, using the things of this world in the manner designed of God, that the places where they occupy may shine as Zion...” (D. and C. 128:8b, c). Disciples spend responsibly in all areas of life, including housing, health care, transportation, food, clothing, recreation, and personal development.

Live as a Generous Disciple

Generosity is one of the ways we can honor both our heritage and our call to live as prophetic people who help shape the future God has envisioned for all creation. A Disciple’s Generous Response is a whole life commitment we choose to make in response to God’s wonderful generosity. We express our gratitude to God with each breath of life we take as we share generously, save wisely, and spend responsibly. Understanding our stewardship at the personal, congregational, and denominational levels will bless us spiritually and grow us as a community, so that we can respond “more fully and joyfully for the great work to which [we] are called” and engaged (D. and C. 154:5b).

For additional information and recommended resources, please visit the Presiding Bishopric home page at www.CofChrist.org/bishop.

Notes

1. Dean L. May, “The Philanthropy Dilemma: The Mormon Church Experience,” *Faith and Philanthropy in America*, (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990), 212.
2. Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 2.
3. Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, rev. ed. (New York: Friendship Press, 1990), 1.

24. Bringing Balance to Life

All life requires a rhythm of rest. There is a rhythm in our waking activity and the body’s need for sleep. There is a rhythm in the way day dissolves into night, and night into morning. There is a rhythm as the active growth of spring and summer is quieted by the necessary dormancy of fall and winter. There is a tidal rhythm, a deep, eternal conversation between the land and the great sea. In our bodies, the heart perceptibly rests after each life-giving beat; the lungs rest between the exhale and the inhale.

We have lost this essential rhythm. Our culture invariably supposes that action and accomplishment are better than rest, that doing something—anything—is better than doing nothing. Because of our desire to succeed, to meet these ever-growing expectations, we do not rest. Because we do not rest, we lose our way. We miss the compass points that would show us where to go, we bypass the nourishment that would give us succor. We miss the quiet that would give us wisdom. We miss the joy and love born of effortless delight. Poisoned by this hypnotic belief that good things come only through unceasing, determination and tireless effort, we

can never truly rest. And for want of rest, our lives are in danger.’

Sabbath is a gift of God to both remind us and to give us *permission* to rest, to bring a balance into our lives. Even our dedication to the service of others as ministers, when not balanced with healthy living, can lead to suffering in ourselves, our families, and in the ones we are trying to serve. Even God rested on the seventh day: “...and I rested on the seventh day from all my work; and all things which I had made were finished. And I, God, saw that they were good” (Genesis 2:2 IV). We rest to bring balance to our lives, to see the goodness that God has placed in all God’s creation. When our lives are out of balance we fail to see how God is already moving before us and often fail to see even the direction that God would have us go. From a simple call to serve God, we turn into driven creatures and can burn out from trying

to minister out of our own resources rather than out of God's love and grace for us.

Donald R. Hands and Wayne L. Fehr wrote a book titled *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy*. It was based on their experiences as clinical and spiritual directors working with burned-out clergy in the St. Baranabas Center in Wisconsin, USA. In referring to the ministers they were working with they comment, "They could not begin to get well without entering into their relationship with God at a new depth of intimacy and surrender." They go on to say, "what clergy need above all today is a genuine 'personal spirituality.' That is, they need to find a concrete way of living their relationship to God, so as to maintain a balance and integration of head and heart, work and leisure, intimacy and sexuality, prayer and action, professional role and personal life. In effect, they need to achieve a psychologically healthy spirituality."²

To balance one's life, to provide times for rest and self-care is not selfish. It follows the pattern set for us by God in the creation story, and by Jesus Christ who often left the crowds to find balance in his own life and ministry. In fact, as Hands and Fehr note, "the self-care of individuals can and must lead to their self-investment in the mission of the church to the world."³ In other words, we balance, care for our own lives so that we may be more effective in our ministry with others. This balance is required of both professional and lay ministers. Both have needs of balance, albeit different ones, but nonetheless, important ones if their ministry is to be effective.

When we live without listening to the timing of things—when we live and work in twenty-four-hour shifts without rest—we are on war time, mobilized for battle. Yes, we are strong and capable people, we can work without stopping, faster and faster, electric lights making artificial day so the whole machine can labor without ceasing. But remember; No living thing lives like this. There are greater rhythms that govern how life grows: circadian rhythms, seasons and hormonal cycles and sunsets and moonrises and great movements of seas and stars. We are part of the creation story, subject to all its laws and rhythms.⁴

One of the significant findings in numerous surveys of ministers is that, "They do not spend time in silent openness to God or let the Word of God speak to their own personal situations."⁵ We are reminded to "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). And we are counseled that we "must not perform anything to the Lord, save in the first place you shall pray to the Father in the name of Christ that he will consecrate our performance to you, that your performance may be for the welfare of your soul" (II Nephi 14:12). This is also necessary for the welfare of the souls to whom you bring ministry.

An unbalanced life and ministry can bring great harm to those we attempt to minister to. Some of the greatest harm in the world has come from those who in the name of God or a religion have sought to dominate others of God's creation. An unbalanced life can also be quickly overwhelmed

by the needs of those we are called to serve. Matthew 25:36-47 (IV) can easily be distorted and become oppressive without balanced living. When we see God in the hungry and thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the homeless, the sick, the imprisoned, we see insatiable needs. To not respond is to reject God, we think, and we then fall into the trap of drivenness that can lead to depression and isolation. However, from a balanced life, one lived in the grace and liberation of the Spirit, we can more clearly determine when we should respond and when we should decline. Remember, Jesus declined at times because he needed rest to balance his life. So also, do we. Roy M. Oswald said, in evaluating his own lack of balance that caused him to crash and burn,

What if I had viewed God's call first and foremost as an invitation to liberation and wholeness? If I had applied God's Grace to myself first, I might have been able to respond by living a joyful, serene life in the midst of my people. My mission would have been not only to preach the liberating word of Grace to my people, but to model a way for them to live by that Grace.⁶

Our actions can speak louder than our words. By living a balanced life, we give hope to others by our modeling of graceful wholeness in our lives.

A balanced life is one in which sabbath time is respected as paramount to our ministry. As Muller says, "Sabbath is a way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity."⁷ Sabbath as balance is more than just what we normally think of as "spiritual activities," but also exercise, hobbies, time with family, reading, taking time off, etc., for "purposeless enjoyment."⁸

The more balanced our lives as ministers, the more we can let ourselves be loved and affirmed by God at ever deepening levels. When we operate out of a sense of our belovedness, we will have a "heightened awareness of God in all things (including the work of ministering to others), a relaxed reliance upon divine power in all that one undertakes, a nonanxious presence to others, a deep *affective* relationship to God, and preaching from the heart *to* the heart."⁹ A balanced life is a holy life and a more effective instrument available for Godly purposes.

Notes

1. Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest* (New York: Bantam, 1999), 1.
2. Donald R. Hands and Wayne L. Fehr, *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy* (Bethesda, Maryland: Alban Institute, 1993), xviii.
3. *Ibid.*, xix.
4. Muller, *Sabbath*, 68-69.
5. Hands and Fehr, 13.
6. Roy M. Oswald, *Clergy Self-Care* (Bethesda, Maryland: Alban Institute, 1991), 15.
7. Muller, *Sabbath*, 6.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Hands and Fehr, 63.

25. Leadership Expectations

The list of expectations for competent church leadership is a long one. While no one person could possibly have all the gifts and skills required for excellent ecclesiastical leadership, most congregations do have several individuals who, if they choose to work together, can provide the kind of leadership God's people deserve. The following are ten expectations:

Pastor and Servant:

Church leaders are called to be kind, caring, and loving people who understand that God cherishes all creation and calls us to do the same. They understand the relational nature of the gospel and are committed to being a part of a loving, nurturing congregational unit. The leader humbly serves to meet human needs and helps others live out God's desires for creation. Good leaders are able to honor the emotions and feelings of others, and are able to sense how others are feeling.

Collaborator and Networker:

Although different leadership styles are appropriate based on individual circumstance, the primary model for Community of Christ leaders is that of collaborator and networker. They are called to work together in partnership and to seek out others whose abilities can be blended for the good of all. No single individual has the time, capacity, or skill to successfully lead the church. Church administrators should capitalize on this reality and turn it into a blessing.

Motivator and Inspirer:

Lifelong religious faith and practice involves motivation and inspiration. Leaders are called upon to be, to speak, and to act in ways that stir in others the desire to respond to God's love and goodness. Those who motivate find ways to speak to the human condition and our capacity to make a difference in God's world.

Preacher and Teacher:

Leaders are constantly informing, guiding, instructing, and causing others to focus on key life issues. Religious leaders not only do this in the classroom but also the pulpit. Church leadership demands those who serve to develop good teaching and preaching skills.

Organizer and Communicator:

The competing demands of life require the effective leader to be organized, efficient, prompt, and always in the mode of communicator and informer. Congregations and

mission centers cannot function unless there is a workable, comprehensible structure in place. The wise leader also understands that information must be shared in a variety of ways, over a period of time, and with clarity.

Student and Learner:

Those committed to a lifetime of service recognize the need for ongoing education, training, and development. Church leaders should find venues wherein they can continuously improve their theological, administrative, and pastoral skills.

Bridge and Conduit:

Church administrators are the link between the entire denomination, the mission center, and the congregation. They have allegiance to all three and work to integrate them into a holistic witnessing body of disciples. They are informed as to the purpose of the three units and help them function in harmony.

Visionary and Guide:

Leaders function in the present but understand the "big picture" and can help others understand the future that can be created. They understand the church's call to proclaim Jesus Christ and to build community. Visionaries are both dreamers and pragmatists, and they are able to describe the various possibilities that can be translated into reality.

Missionary and Evangelist:

Christian leaders understand that invitation, witness, and hospitality are spiritual dimensions to life and are not optional if one is to be a disciple. Leaders are called not only to proclaim the good news, but to share it with those who have not heard. Christian leaders seek out those who are searching and are quick to ask others to join them in a life of study, praise, and service.

Self-Aware, Self-Managed, and Self-Motivated:

Those who seek to give a lifetime of service and leadership are "in it for the long haul." They realize that good intention and temporary excitement are not sufficient. As such effective ministers are self-aware, self-managed, and self-motivated. They are aware of their own thoughts, feelings, and shortcomings, and they have the ability to manage their own time, emotions, impulses, feelings, and ideas. Christian leaders persist even in the midst of failure and disappointment, and find new ways to tackle difficult issues.

26. Collaborative Leadership

Being a leader means being a servant first. Seeing leadership as a calling to ministry allows the leader to be more helpful to the congregation. The welfare of the congregation should be the most important motivation for the leader. The leadership role is a stewardship that one fills until a better leader comes along. The leadership role should not be owned or possessed by any one person. A servant leader partners with others so that the congregation benefits from the gifts of many. The focus of the leader is to serve the congregation regardless of personal gain or loss.

The effective, collaborative leader builds a team that is charged with the power to create a vision and act upon it. The individual members are allowed to express their gifts and callings while serving as members of the leadership team. Members of the team mentor one another, advocate for one another, empower one another, and support one another.

Recruitment and support of volunteer team members is much as it would be if the team members were full-time employees. First, identify those who have the gift or calling for a particular role. Sometimes the individual may have developed his or her gift, other times the person may barely be aware of it. Recruit the team members who will most complement the task at hand. Second, work with the person to assure that the demands of the role are realistic in relation to the person's available time and energy. It is important that the logistics of the role do not put unreasonable demands on the person. Third, follow the guidelines for effective team building and support, including the understanding of effective team process. That includes the following elements:

- *Forming the team*—this is a time of excitement and newness when members are optimistic about the team participation.

- *Adjusting the team*—as the individuals become a team, conflicts can arise; members get to know each other's strengths and weaknesses.
- *Becoming a team*—individuals gel into a functioning team and loyalty is developed; the team sees itself as a unit and finds it can laugh or cry together.
- *Performing as a team*—like a flock of geese flying in a "V" with the lead position being shared as each one's energy allows, team members share leadership and delegate roles when appropriate.
- *Celebrating the team's conclusion*—at the end of team function, members celebrate the accomplishments of the team and dismiss the members.

Collaborative leadership includes conducting responsible and effective team meetings. The operational guidelines of such a meeting should include:

- Having a purpose for the meeting
- Starting on time
- Agreeing on the meeting time and length
- Setting priorities
- Following an agenda
- Managing the time during the meeting
- Organizing tasks and making assignments
- Listening effectively
- Building consensus

The collaborative leader forms an empowered team. By following the guidelines outlined in this discussion, the team can be effective and responsive to the needs of the congregation. The congregation and the leadership team are then blessed.

27. Congregational Systems

Christian discipleship is a social activity. Ministry best occurs in motivated, passionate, and compassionate communities, rather than lone individuals. Healthy congregations are faith communities that provide transformational ministries fostering good relationships with God, others and self. A healthy congregation is an interdependent system of relationships, processes, goals, and activities. Effective ministerial leaders are called to acknowledge, uphold, and encourage the invaluable contributions each person gives to the success of the whole body. Congregations become vital expressions of the body of Christ when its spiritual energy is released, passionate discipleship is demonstrated, various voices are integrated, relationships are deepened, decision-making is collaborative, and collective learning is ongoing.

Community of Christ congregations promote mission and grow disciples through a wide variety of formal and informal leadership systems. Effective ministerial leaders become proficient in functioning within the organizational structures and environments guiding the ministry of their congregation without becoming shackled by the limitations of their congregational system. In many situations, the appropriate leadership step is to modify and adjust the organizational structure to better address the current needs of the congregation. This ministerial leadership skill of understanding, working with and through congregational systems is important for all groups, small or large, young or old, traditional or contemporary, conservative and ones continuously expanding their scope of ministries and witness. Leaders in healthy congregations guide members into

active mission response through effective use of available congregational leadership systems.

Congregational leadership systems have three basic arenas: (1) official administrative directors; (2) passionate and competent influencers and spokespeople; and (3) keepers of relational traditions, cultures, and norms. These three areas are not mutually exclusive; nevertheless, they often represent distinct voices in congregational life and direction. Healthy congregations incorporate each of these arenas of perspectives in their programs and ministry.

Official Administrative Directors:

For most congregations, this voice is represented by the elected pastor, the associated counselors, and the appointed financial officer. In healthy congregational systems, this voice upholds local mission, connects with world mission and denominational ties, promotes active worship life, organizes the calendar of events, assures pastoral ministry, assures financial solvency, stimulates creative input from the body, and guides programs and activities with intentionality. This voice provides formal leadership that people internal and external to the congregation expect from organizational entities. In unhealthy systems, this voice becomes dictatorial or, inversely, becomes invisible and non-existent, creating the appearance of a rudderless group. In unhealthy congregations, this voice may limit information sharing and hinder interdependence by promoting environments of dependency. In unhealthy congregations, this voice evolves into the sole voice of the congregation. Congregations need healthy input, direction, and encouragement from official administrative directors in their leadership system.

Passionate and Competent Influencers and Spokespeople:

This congregational voice often is represented by program leaders, former and future administrative officers, and activists who are energized by the ideals of Christian discipleship. In healthy congregational systems, this voice upholds servant ministry principles and values, promotes growth into new areas of ministry, reminds people of the influence of the Holy Spirit, upholds theological foundations of activities, brings a sense of immediacy to ministry, and assures self-reflection and self-assessment. This voice provides energy creating texture, substance, enthusiasm, and spirituality to the congregation's programs and ministries. In unhealthy systems, this voice becomes overly critical and judgmental or, inversely, is completely ignored. In unhealthy congregations, this voice may fragment the

group by creating environments of ultimatum-giving arising from competing moral and time-commitment imperatives. In unhealthy congregations, this voice evolves into destructive self-righteousness. Congregations need healthy input, response, support, and guidance from passionate and competent influencers and spokespeople in their leadership system.

Keepers of Relational Traditions, Cultures, and Norms:

This congregational voice usually is represented by long-time members, people with extended family connections within the group, and congenial people heartened by the ideals of Christian fellowship. In healthy congregational systems, this voice upholds a sense of identity and history, promotes positive self-esteem, maintains contacts and pastoral care, brings a sense of acceptance in ministry, promotes social interactions and activities, assures interpersonal connections and relationship-building. This voice provides connective links giving rhythm and interdependency to the activity flow and people of the congregation. In unhealthy systems, this voice becomes overly rigid and a barrier for growth or, inversely, is marginalized and not heard. In unhealthy congregations, this voice may diminish creativity and passion by focusing solely on successful people and programs of the past. In unhealthy congregations, this voice evolves into a mechanism of exclusive control and direction. Congregations need healthy input, approval, perspective, and insight from keepers of relational traditions, cultures and norms.

Effective ministerial leaders are challenged to understand the balance of the different arenas of voices in their congregational leadership system. The success of programs and ministry depends upon healthy inclusion of a wide range of perspectives in planning and implementation. In many congregations a few people represent all three of the voice arenas; in some cases this situation is inevitable because of the small numbers in the group. In most cases, however, too few people laying claim to representing all voices is a cautionary symptom pointing to exclusive ownership of congregational leadership. Too often, congregational leaders feeling they are the only ones able and willing to provide ministry becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Collaborative and inclusive decision-making is a modern-day expectation in healthy and Spirit-filled congregational life. Healthy congregational systems empower all participants to respond in discipleship with enthusiasm, commitment, joy, and a desire to give themselves to God.

28. Strategic Planning

As prophetic people, we are called to co-create the future with God. Strategic planning allows a group such as a congregation or a mission center to actively engage together in listening and responding to God's call. A mission statement is a group's expression of this future. It is the group's understanding of who they are, who they serve, why they exist, and what they value. As the group listens to God in shaping the group's mission, they also discern how the future will look different from the present because the group has been faithful to the mission. A vision statement is a group's expression of what the future will look like if the group is successful in accomplishing their mission.

With the group's sight set on their vision and enthused by their mission, the group sets out to determine how they might use their giftedness in meeting specific needs in their area that will help them achieve their mission and vision. This step requires the group to identify their gifts as well as recognizing how those gifts might be used for responding to God's call. Matching gifts to God's call is reflected in the development of the group's strategies. Undoubtedly, the group will sense that there are more strategies than can be accomplished in the near term. Thus, the group listens to God's call in trying to understand how to decide where to begin. An action plan is the prioritized list of objectives and targets for each strategy that defines how the group will faithfully respond to God's call. Then the group begins the journey together. Along this journey, the group periodically pauses to listen to God's course directions and to reflect on how the group is doing. This is strategic planning or discerning God's will in planning church mission.

There are many different models for strategic planning. At the time of this writing, appreciative inquiry and asset-based planning are two of the better models available. Several references books a group might consider using include the following:

- *Strategic Planning for Churches: An Appreciative Approach* by Charles Elliot (Christian Ministry Resources)
- *The Power of Asset Mapping: Acting on Your Congregation's Strengths* by Luther K. Snow (The Alban Institute)
- *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations* by Michael Allison and Jude Kay (John Wiley and Sons, Inc.)
- *Seeking and Doing God's Will* by Garrie Stevens, Pamela Lardear, and Sharon Duger (Discipleship Resources)
- *Holy Conversations* by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann (The Alban Institute)

Additional resources can be found through the Alban Institute Web site (www.alban.org), which is an excellent source

for strategic planning and other church leadership material for congregations.

The key is to choose a model that feels appropriate to the group and that recognizes the group's need to partner with God in creating the plan. Regardless of the strategic planning model selected, the process can be summarized as follows: First, leaders and the group must set up for success. This includes making sure that the group has a common agreement on what they want to do, why they want to do it, what they are hoping to achieve, and how they will proceed. This can also be seen as making a commitment to plan.

Second, the group must define their challenge. This includes discerning their mission and vision. This also includes prayerfully identifying their giftedness and considering how God is calling them to share that giftedness in the community.

Third, the group must set the course. This means identifying strategies, objectives, targets, and means and methods. A strategy is a holistic statement of a group's strategic orientation in accomplishing the goals of the church. Strategies may take multiple years to achieve. A group's mission, vision, and strategies are generally collected in the strategic or mission plan.

Objectives are key areas of focus in a given fiscal year toward which effort is directed in order to achieve a strategy. Accomplishment of objectives is assessed by measuring progress toward achieving targets for specific indicators. Targets are the desired state to be achieved by a particular, typically numeric in nature. Measuring progress toward the target allows assessment of the accomplishment of an objective. Means and methods are specific tasks, projects, or processes that are accomplished in order to achieve the objective. The best test of means and methods will be their ability to move an identified objective closer to its target. The objectives, targets, and means and methods for a given fiscal year are typically collected in an annual action plan.

The fourth major element of strategic planning is keeping the plan relevant. This entails implementing the annual action plan. It also includes monitoring and evaluating your success in completing the action plan and in how well the action plan helps the group succeed in its strategic plan. Monitoring and evaluating allows a group to pause and reflect, to see God's blessings in the process, to seek God's guidance in making adjustments in the journey, and to remain faithful in responding to God's call.

Prophetic people cannot *predict* the future. Prophetic people can help *shape* the future by listening, discerning, planning, responding, and reflecting.

29. Conflict in the Church

For purposes of this article, conflict will be defined as a potential hurtful difference between two or more people. God has created each of us as unique beings; thus we have a multitude of differences—personalities, gifts and talents, preferences in foods and music, theology, beliefs, and values.

As members of a congregation interact with each other these differences are bound to come into tension. That tension can be good. It can be the impetus for growth—spiritually and numerically. It can also cause rifts in relationships. If not addressed in ways that uphold the worth of each of the persons involved, the differences escalate to destructive results.

Too often people call for assistance when the conflict is ten to fifty years old. The administrators are usually not those who were present or involved in the original rift. Usually the conflict has at its core individuals who have felt offended, hurt, unrecognized, or unacknowledged in some past occurrence in the congregation. The leaders at the time the offense occurred may have hoped it would “just blow over,” and the obvious manifestation of the conflict may have disappeared, while in reality the conflict was subtly rearing its head in a variety of ways over the years. Needless to say, conflicts that have that much history take a great deal of time and outside intervention to work through.

Steps for dealing with conflict:

A. Be proactive!

- Enhance and develop your own personal skills in dealing with differences (see list of available trainings from Peacebuilding Specialist office at the end of this article).
 - Involve the congregation in taking conflict resolution skills trainings (see list of available trainings from Peacebuilding specialist office at the end of this article).
 - Name the concerns out loud when they first appear—don't sweep them under the rug. For example, “There have been concerns expressed about youth activity in the foyer during the service. We will take time on ___ to share perspectives about this concern.”
- B. Contact the peacebuilding specialist to consult on options for dealing with differences. Call sooner rather than later.
- C. Expect people to address their concerns and differences with each other in a direct, timely, and compassionate manner.
- D. Call the peacebuilding specialist if people are unable to resolve their differences by themselves.
- E. Create an environment in which expressing differing perspectives is safe and encouraged.

Here is the most important advice for any administrator and member of a congregation: **Address the differences early before they become irreconcilable.** The peacebuilding specialist is pleased to have people call and consult regarding differences between members. Early intervention can benefit the life of the congregation and the mission of the church. No disagreement is too small or inconsequential to call about. For more information, the peacebuilding specialist has a handbook that is available upon request.

Conflicts in the church are not just about the visible issues. People bring baggage from their families of origin—family system issues. They come to the church often unconsciously looking to heal from gaps in their nurturing in their families of origin. Just because an individual is pastor does not exclude him or her from the human baggage common to all people. Not only do people have conflicts about identifiable issues from current events, they often have historical baggage from their own life journey. Leaders need to take a special look at the historical baggage in their own lives and in their lives in the church community to see how aspects of their lives, past and present, impact any conflict situation they are dealing with.

We call the church community our family, and the dynamics of family systems are apparent in the church family. Consciously and unconsciously we all come to the church family seeking ways to heal the wounds of life. Sometimes the wounds are so deep the congregation is ill equipped to handle the individual's needs. In some instances the individual's behavior becomes problematic. Arthur Boers in *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior* states:

“Difficult behavior” is not conflict, criticism, argument, or occasional irrationality, all of which leaders can expect as a normal part of our work. “Difficult behavior” is not that which “pushes one’s buttons.” After all, people react variously to vastly different circumstances, as temperament and personality inventories show. We all have different “buttons.” “Difficult behavior” is patterned and sustained behavior that is abusive, irrational, hostile, adversarial, or distorted. It reflects the kinds of problematic behavior and distorted thinking enumerated in the Level III through V (contest, fight/flight, intractable) categories of conflict.

Boer presents ways that leaders can deal with difficult behavior such that the worth of each person is upheld. He also discusses skills and self-care practices that leaders need to cultivate in order to compassionately and healthily address the “difficult behaviors” of others; for example, self-differentiation, non-anxious presence, dealing with triangulation, “tuning our own harp strings,” developing support persons.

The following bibliography of trainings and books are recommended to assist leaders in their efforts to deal with potentially hurtful differences, etc.

Trainings available through the Peacebuilding Specialist's office:

Interpersonal Peacemaking
Listening Ear
Group Facilitation
Consensus Decision-making

Books:

Augsburger, David. *Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Depest Feelings Towards Others*. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1973.

Boers, Arthur Paul. *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior*. Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1999. ISBN 1-5669-9218-4

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: Guilford Press, 1985. ISBN 0-8986-2059-7

Gilbert, Roberta M., M.D. *Extraordinary Relationships: A New Way of Thinking about Human Interactions*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1992. ISBN 0-4713-4690-X

Miller, Jeffrey A. *The Anxious Organization: Why Smart Companies Do Dumb Things*. Facts on Demand Press, 2002. ISBN 1-88915-0339

Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*. Bethesda, Maryland: Alban Institute, 1996. ISBN 1-5669-9173-0

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30. Diversity

The human community is composed of a rainbow of colors and a rich variety different attitudes/beliefs, abilities, and orientations. Perhaps the greatest challenge each one of us has is to learn to appreciate, value, and respect those differences

Listen carefully to the many testimonies of those around the world who have been led into the fellowship of the Community of Christ. The richness of cultures, the poetry of language, and the breadth of human experience permit the gospel to be seen with new eyes and grasped with freshness of spirit. That gift has been given to you. Do not fail to understand its power. It is for divine purpose that you have been given the struggles as well as the joys of diversity. So must it always be in the peaceable kingdom.

—Doctrine and Covenants 162:4a-b

Key to any consideration of diversity is the need to understand and respect each individual. Initially, understanding begins with open-mindedness and honest communication. Asking questions to discover how others feel and want to be treated clarifies the understandings. Then utilizing the understandings in behaviors that are respectful creates a foundation for positive relationships. The benefits to be gained from seeking to understand and respect others are numerous.

In community, church, or organizational settings, respectful dialogue teaches each about the other's motivations, values, and needs. It is through this process of education that each learns to appreciate the other and personal friendships are built. Finding commonalities through shared relationships avoids stereotyping, communicates respect, and bridges the differences that keep people separated.

There are many ways to learn about others. Here are some possibilities:

1. Build relationships with those who are different from you.
2. Seek out community resources that are representative of diversity.
3. Read or study other cultures or life experiences.
4. Observe without judgment.
5. Talk with others to seek and share understanding.
6. Empower diverse others to be equal decision-makers and partners in your congregation and community.

There are resources available through the World Church for congregational education, dialogue, and advocacy. For more information contact the Council of Twelve office.

The congregational leader can facilitate the accepting and embracing of diversity in many ways. Initially it is important to educate congregational members in the differences between people, how their attitudes toward others impact their outreach potentials. Resources are available from the World Church for diversity education. There are also many resources available in the community—bookstores, the Internet, and some specialized not-for-profit organizations.

Do a congregational assessment to see how the congregational culture invites or alienates potential diverse friends. Who do the pictures posted around the building represent? Are various ethnicities represented or are they all white and middle class? Do the Sunday school materials have many diverse people characterized, or are they of a homogeneous group? Look closely at your congregation without your own cultural glasses. What do you see?

It is important to identify potential future leaders among the diverse individuals who participate in the congregation. Efforts should be made to mentor and develop the individu-

als. Make sure they are represented on congregational committees so their voice can be heard.

And finally, learn to share the decision-making power with diverse others. This can only be accomplished by truly

treating as equals those who are not members of the dominant culture. The journey may take some time, but with effort your congregation can grow into an inviting place, and its members will be blessed in many ways.

31. Communicating as a Church Leader

We communicate all the time, every day, with everybody. Church leaders, on either the congregational or mission center level, may find that almost every task or project they carry out requires communication. If we don't say what we mean, the result is miscommunication. If the other person doesn't understand what we say, no communication takes place. Good communication skills are essential, not only in the work of the church, but in the lives of individuals as well. Without good communication skills, many jobs are performed the wrong way or not at all.

Before attempting to communicate your ideas or instructions, be sure to clarify them in your own mind. Be clear about the purpose of the communication as well as the intended outcome. For example, are you attempting to inform others, to obtain information, or to initiate action? Then allow form to follow function by using the most appropriate means to communicate, whether verbal or written, and assess the best delivery system.

Before you put your fingers to the keyboard or step up to the microphone, decide exactly what you want to get across to the membership and work out a plan for the message that will do the job. The message and the plan can vary enormously: it might be an elaborate and complicated chart of ministry plans for the congregation, an article for the church newsletter, a report for a congregational Web site, or it might be three major points that you wish to convey at a business meeting. Regardless of the method, size, or difficulty of the communication, the basic principles remain the same: know what you are going to say and plan how you will say it.

Communications have a wide variety of purposes:

- sharing information or knowledge
- persuading others to take action
- expressing sympathy or support
- persuading others to reject one set of ideas for another
- entertaining or amusing an audience
- encouraging and upholding others
- stimulating others
- providing assurance and creating harmony

Effective communication requires skill. It takes time and effort to be a good communicator. Use the ideas and suggestions listed here and practice your skills:

- Before engaging in any form of communication decide what you want to say and plan how you want to convey it.
- Once your purpose is clarified, you have eliminated the

greatest cause of wasted effort and confusion, for both yourself and your congregation or mission center.

- Improve your writing by planning articles, paragraphs, and even sentences in advance.
- Efficiency is a basic principle. Convey your message as briefly and clearly as possible.
- Use illustrations, but keep them subordinate to words.
- When writing, think about the “reader over your shoulder.”

Good writing involves more than merely putting words on a page. Many books on writing techniques are available that will help novice as well as experienced writers improve their writing abilities.

Written communication has many advantages—we have time to consider our words, edit the expression of our thoughts, and make sure we convey the intended message. Verbal communication, by contrast, does not provide us with these comforts. Verbal communication might be delivered one-on-one, before a church committee or meeting, as a church service announcement, or at a congregational business meeting or a mission center conference. Regardless of the scope of the communication or the size of the audience, there are basic skills that will enhance the delivery of your message:

- Make sure the other person is listening before you start speaking. Make eye contact or sit in their line of vision before you start.
- Be an attentive listener. When you're talking, you're sharing something you already know. When you're listening, you may learn something new. To understand others, concentrate, ask questions, take notes, and avoid distractions. Be aware of their tone of voice, facial expression, body movement, voice volume, and other clues. Good listening includes attentiveness to both verbal and nonverbal clues.
- Slow your speech down. Most people speak too quickly, making it difficult for people to understand what is being said. This also leaves the speaker with little time to gather thoughts effectively. Consciously slowing down your speech, within reason, will calm you and give you the chance to engage in more meaningful dialogue.
- Speak clearly and accurately. Saying specifically what you mean leaves little room for miscommunication. Say what you mean, how you feel, what you want, and what you think if that's what you want the other person to hear.

- Answering questions or inquiries on the spot may indicate your expertise, but often leaders create problems by answering a difficult question too quickly. Serious matters require some degree of reflection. Let others know that is what you intend to do.

Be aware that you will need different communication strategies for different groups and different situations. Take

advantage of the many options available for communication: e-mail, Web postings, newsletters, bulletin inserts, signboards, local newspapers, and local publications. For additional information on communicating your public relations message to the community, contact Communications Services at World Church headquarters.

32. Communicating in a Crisis

Preparing for the response to a crisis before one occurs minimizes stress and confusion while maximizing competence, courtesy, and personal care for those involved, as well as the congregation/mission center and community as a whole. The following crisis communication plan helps assure that crucial information is delivered with as much accuracy and timeliness as possible under the circumstances.

The possible crises that might face church leaders fall into general categories. The categories and examples cited here attempt to anticipate the kinds of crises that are possible or likely, helping to remove the element of surprise and provide more complete preparation. They might include, but not be limited, to the following examples:

- Natural disasters (flooding, tornadoes, wildfires)
- Criminal or legal action (priesthood, staff member, volunteer, member, or friend of the church charged with a crime, sexual harassment lawsuit, or other action brought against the individual or the church)
- Violent acts, demonstrations, death, or violent injuries (hostage situation, demonstration against church policies, member or staff injured or killed)
- Personnel crises (resignation or firing of staff member, staff member hospitalized)
- Financial crises (embezzlement by a staff member or volunteer, failure of a bank that holds congregational funds, sharp drop in congregational or mission center income)

Conferring with the mission center officers in times of crisis communication is imperative. Congregational leaders should always keep the mission center officers apprised of crisis situations or potential crises. Mission center officers should always consult with the Council of Twelve, and then the Presiding Bishopric, Legal Services, Risk Management, Human Resources, and Communication Services as circumstances would deem appropriate.

Church leadership should respond promptly to those impacted by a crisis as well as the media, when necessary. The communication goal is to provide accurate information, ministry, and maintain the integrity of the church. Avoid panic, rumor, and speculation by controlling the flow of information. All work carried out within a crisis communication plan should be marked by openness, accessibility, truthfulness, and responsiveness, reinforcing the role of the church as a caring and compassionate ministry.

The following communication strategies are designed to assist leadership in implementing a coordinated response:

- Gather facts about the crisis.
- Report the crisis to mission center and headquarters officials through appropriate channels. A situation analysis may include, but not be limited to, the scope of the situation, any legal implications, the public's perception, and other related events (past and future).
- Designate an appropriate spokesperson; for consistency, all communication should flow through the spokesperson.
- Without delay, develop the key message to be conveyed as well as the target audience to receive the communication. A key message allows leadership to present a particular viewpoint on the information that is released.
- Leaders may choose to form a crisis team to carry out specific duties such as gathering information, notifying families and others involved, dealing with emergency officials, and communicating with volunteers and staff.
- Depending upon the particular crisis and time constraints, leaders should make use of as many communication tools as are available and appropriate: e-mail, fax, letter sent by regular mail, newsletter, telephone, and Web site.
- Any communication of the key message to the media should be approved by the mission center officer(s) and be delivered or released through the designated spokesperson.
- Basic principles should guide any communication with public media:
 1. Answer all questions as directly and briefly as possible, in a positive manner.
 2. The spokesperson must be accessible to reporters.
 3. Provide supplemental information in the form of fact sheets.
 4. Do not argue with reporters.
 5. Never speak "off the record."
 6. Avoid speculations and allocations of blame.
 7. Avoid delaying any responses to a media request.
 8. Avoid church and ecclesiastical jargon.
 9. When an answer is not available, never say "no comment." Explain that to the reporter and promise

to call back within a specified time frame. Then be sure to follow through.

When the crisis is over, say so, clearly, and then do not linger on it. Move on, modeling healthy and up-front behavior. Encourage others to do so as well.

Remember that you need to communicate with all parts of the congregation/mission center more than once on any issue in order to make an impact. Make sure all people feel involved in the issues at hand.

33. Supporting Denominational Initiatives

It is understandable and admirable that as an administrator in a local jurisdiction, you are always conscious of the needs of your area and your responsibilities there. But your responsibilities and opportunities are much broader than that. Yours is not just an isolated congregation trying to maintain its own health and functioning. You are an integral part of a worldwide church that fulfills its divine mission through the cooperative functioning at the local level.

The corporate goals are only accomplished to the degree that the congregations are working toward those objectives. As a part of your ordination and acceptance of an administrative position, you accepted the responsibility of keeping

up to date on current church objectives, church-sponsored events and programming, and available resources. You are the key person who introduces and explains programming to your people, who encourages and assists them to attend events, and who introduces the resources that will assist them and their congregations.

You are the link to the World Church, and in that part of your role you are essentially an advocate and representative of the World Church. If local administrators fail in this functioning, the church will fail in accomplishing its mission. Help your congregation experience the energy of knowing that it is playing its part in the prophetic vision of pursuing peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit.