

Church leadership in rural America

Pursuing Leadership Excellence

Leadership Excellence: the alignment of value, vision, and action to reflect the character of HIM you represent.

Excellence in leadership could be Biblically described as the Person who is "all in" - totally engaged for you. Our example is Jesus and therefore using Jesus as our example makes it necessary to align ourselves with His standard.

* Do you ever wonder why some places are thriving?

- Not about money, people resources, or form and function. No amount of money, people, or form and function can adequately replace the spiritual substance necessary to thrive over the long haul.

The reason I see some thriving is the what and how of their doing is substantially overshadowed by the why they do it.

There are inherent dangers in the pursuit of leadership excellence or leadership growth to the point of excellence. The models we have today are largely from a different era and leading from what brought you to the place you're at will - by design - fail! If a leading led you to this place it has done its job! At times the church is totally resistible because leadership strategy is stuck in a by-gone era.

* Generational transitions require a shift in strategy. Tomorrow's leaders will gravitate to tomorrow's solutions. Learning from yesterday is wholly different than living there!

* Dump the assumptions - history belongs to the innovators.

👉 LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE REQUIRES MOVING FROM MANAGING TO LEADING.

ACTS 6:1-4,
traditional
pastoral
roles do not
scale well

- 👉 Leaders see outcomes in the future and work toward today.
- 👉 Managers see outcomes of the past and work toward maintaining them today.
- 👉 Inherent danger: **relevance conflict.**

- 👉 Leaders pursue resources to accomplish tomorrow's reality.
- 👉 Managers build boundaries with today's resources to maintain yesterday's accomplishments
- 👉 Inherent danger: **reality conflict.**

- 👉 Leaders use future outcomes as reality to take risks and embrace change.
- 👉 Managers use yesterday's outcomes to limit risk and resist change.
- 👉 Inherent danger: **focus conflict.**

👉 LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE PRESENTS A MOVING TARGET.

PHIL. 3:12-21

- 👉 Leaders move toward a vision which is a picture of a preferable future that is not always completely clear.
- 👉 Managers move toward a fixed target where end result is determined.
- 👉 Inherent danger: **delusional conclusions.**

*** Excellence is a pursuit not a destination.**

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LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE REVEALS SYSTEM INADEQUACIES.

2 COR. 10:12

☞ Leaders begin, by design, to question the system. Even if the system is working leaders need to think about the day when it might not work or more importantly the day when changes need to be made to continue the pursuit of excellence. **Mission is sacred - methods aren't.**

- ☞ Managers, by design, mask system inadequacies to maintain status quo.
- ☞ Inherent danger: **painful revelation of status quo.**

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE REQUIRES A LEVEL OF DISSATISFACTION.

PHIL. 1:9-10

☞ Leaders become dissatisfied with certain concepts and definitions of words, knowing there is much more of God's character to discover.

- ☞ Managers seek comfort through understood concepts and accepted definitions.
- ☞ Inherent danger: **misinterpreted dissatisfaction.**

PURSUING LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE REQUIRES CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS.

If today becomes acceptable, change will be very difficult. Change happens as an example in leaders before change is considered in the average individual. Change propels us to the future.

Remember a change in form (venue, music, technology) will never be an adequate substitute for a change in substance.

- ❖ **CHANGE CONSIDERATION: COSTS.** Most cost considerations that come from pursuing leadership excellence are not monetary! The cost consideration of most change come in the form of transparency. The ability to live out loud the transitions of excellence that God has for us.

Webster's
1828
Dictionary

✓ **The cost of humility** (freedom from pride and arrogance; humbleness of mind; a modest estimate of one's own worth) may come with a level of transparency to admit being wrong and leading the change to right thinking and acting at this new level of excellence.

✓ **The cost of honesty** (an upright disposition; moral rectitude of heart; a disposition to conform to justice and correct moral principles, in all social transactions. In fact, upright conduct; an actual conformity to justice and moral rectitude) may come with a "stretching" level of character (the soul mark left after meeting with God) development.

- ✓ **The cost of trust** (confidence; a reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship or other sound principle of another person.) may come with an increasing of "actionable trust" (the amount of unanswered questions you are willing to start moving with).

Excellence is a spiritual quality that is much different than planning. Planning has within it a basic conspiracy to resist change that does not fit into the plan as we thought it out.

Dan. 6:3, NKJV, "Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm."