

June 2004

# Connecting People and Purpose: A Christian Theory of Library Leadership

Gregory A. Smith

*Liberty University*, [greg@liberty.edu](mailto:greg@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib\\_fac\\_pubs](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs)

---

## Recommended Citation

Smith, Gregory A., "Connecting People and Purpose: A Christian Theory of Library Leadership" (2004). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 28.

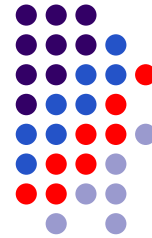
[http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib\\_fac\\_pubs/28](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs/28)

This Conference Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Jerry Falwell Library at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu).

# Connecting People and Purpose

## *A Christian Theory of Library Leadership*

Gregory A. Smith  
Dean, Integrated Learning Resource Center  
Liberty University



©2004 Gregory A. Smith

## Why are we convening?

- We recognize the need for strong leadership in the library community.
- We desire to explore the integration of faith and library leadership.



Connecting People and Purpose

## What resources are available?

Leadership (Non-Christian)	Leadership (Christian)
Library leadership (Non-Christian)	Library leadership (Christian)



## What obstacles do we face?

- The literature of leadership is vast, defying simple analysis.
- Library literature tends to ignore leadership in favor of administration.





## What are our assumptions?

- The Bible does not address library leadership directly, yet its teachings are nonetheless relevant.
- A Christian theory of library leadership will integrate . . .
  - biblical teaching
  - leadership research
  - library practice



## What are our assumptions?

- Effective management *and* leadership are needed for an organization to thrive.
- A Christian theory of library leadership will value both . . .
  - people
  - and
  - purpose

## What are our assumptions?

Research of [the early and middle twentieth century] demonstrated consistently . . . that effective task leaders were bifurcated in their leadership approach: **Consideration for followers . . . was crucial and statistically significant, as was a strong task orientation. Effective managers showed high concern for people *and* for production.** (Sorenson & Goethals, 2004)



## What are our assumptions?

The one thing missing--absent, in fact--from most systems-based approaches is the integral reality that libraries are human organizations. . . . As we have already seen, **any organization is made up of people who coalesce around a common set of beliefs and sometimes a common purpose. . . .**



## What are our assumptions?

The constant challenge to managers and leaders is the recognition that they are working with people, not with offices or positions. That said, **the human side has to be tempered by the realization that there are some core organizational goals and purposes**, and if some people do not fit those goals and purposes, they may be misplaced in the organization. (Budd, 1998, p. 315)



## Exercise

Answer the question that Kouzes & Posner (2002) have asked of more than 75,000 people:

**[S]elect the seven qualities that [you] “most look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction [you] would willingly follow.” (p. 24)**





## Exercise

The ten most cited traits in Kouzes & Posner's (2002) most recent study are:

1. Honest
2. Forward-looking
3. Competent
4. Inspiring
5. Intelligent
6. Fair-minded
7. Broad-minded
8. Supportive
9. Straightforward
10. Dependable

How does your group's list compare?



## Biblical Leadership

- Prophet (Pro)
- Priest (Pri)
- King (K)
- Apostle (A)
- Pastor (Pa)



## Overview

- Character
- Purpose
- Servanthood
- Balance
- Communication
- Lifelong learning



## Character

- **K** Does not lust for power, sexual indulgence, or wealth ([Deut. 17:16-17](#))
- **Pa** Is more devoted to godliness than money ([1 Tim. 3:3; 6:3-11; Tit. 1:7](#))
- **Pa** Persists in his calling through persecution and disloyalty ([2 Tim. 1:6-14](#))
- **Pa** Evidences ability to manage local church through home life ([1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6](#))





## Character

- In the matter of leadership, character is as important as behavior.
- The ethical commitments of the Christian library leader should center in the virtue of love (Smith, 2002)
  - for God and neighbor (great commandment)
  - fellow believer (new commandment)



## Purpose

**Pro** Faithfully proclaims God's words alone ([Deut. 18:18-22](#))

**A** Focuses on core roles ([Acts 6:1-4](#))

**Pa** Avoids unprofitable behavior and instructs followers to do the same ([1 Tim. 1:3-7](#); [Tit. 3:9-11](#))

**Pa** Encourages followers to pursue mission at the cost of personal rights ([1 Tim. 6:1-2](#))



## Purpose

[B]ringing meaning to life in the present by focusing on making life better in the long run is an essential ingredient in getting extraordinary things done. **All enterprises or projects, big or small, begin in the mind's eye**; they begin with imagination and with the belief that what's merely an image can one day be made real. (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 111)



## Purpose

For effective library leadership to exist, there must be a vision. **For leadership to succeed, it needs form and function, process and purpose, and that all begins with a clearly articulated vision of the future of the library.** This is the essence of visionary leadership. (Riggs, 1998, p. 57)

## Servanthood

A Understands that service constitutes greatness ([Mark 9:33-36](#))

A Is reluctant to boast of personal accomplishments ([2 Cor. 12:1ff](#))

A Is unashamed of personal weakness ([2 Cor. 12:7-10](#))

Pa Leads by example and by word rather than asserting authority ([1 Tim. 4:11-16](#); [Tit. 2:7](#); [1 Pet. 5:3](#))



## Servanthood

The theme of service has received persistent attention in Christian library literature (Delivuk, 1999; Doncevic, 2003; Johnson, 1985; Miller, 1981; Nicole, 1982; Riga, 1962; Smith, 2002; Terhune 2002/1982).



## Servanthood

Doncevic (2003) argues that the conventional model of library administration, which concerns itself with “impersonally directing people and delegating with strict oversight” (p. 171) is inadequate for today’s marketplace. Drawing on Robert K. Greenleaf’s concept of servant leadership, he sets forth five imperatives (be authentic, present, vulnerable, accepting, and useful).



## Servanthood

. . . the only authority deserving one’s allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader. (Greenleaf, 1991/1977, p. 10)



## Servanthood

True greatness, true leadership, is achieved not by reducing men to one's service but in giving oneself in selfless service to them. And this is never done without cost. (Sanders, 1967, p. 13)



## Balance

**Pa** Treats different classes of people with due respect and propriety ([1 Tim. 5:1-2](#))

**Pa** Deals with controversy appropriately ([2 Tim. 2:23-26](#))

**Pa** Acts as a shepherd--nurturing, feeding, guiding, and caring for followers ([1 Pet. 5:2](#))



## Balance

[T]he successful manager of men can be primarily characterized neither as a strong leader nor as a permissive one. Rather, he is one who maintains a high batting average in accurately assessing the forces that determine what his most appropriate behavior at any given time should be and in actually being able to behave accordingly. (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973/1958, p. 180)



## Balance

Blake & McCauley's Leadership Grid® plots a leader's behavior in two dimensions: concern for people and concern for production. They postulate that a leader is most effective when performing well on both dimensions; this is referred to as team management (Hackman & Johnson, 2000, pp. 49-51).





## Balance

Bull (2000) used the Managerial Grid® (a precursor of the Leadership Grid®) to assess the managerial styles of directors of CCCU libraries. “The most frequently self-selected managerial style of this group of library directors was the Managerial Grid® 1/1 Impoverished style selected by 37.8%, followed by 1/9 Country Club style selected by 35.4%.”



## Balance

Fred Fiedler’s work established that certain types of leadership behaviors are more effective under certain predictable conditions. . . . When the task is unstructured and complex and the subordinates are highly educated, Fiedler found that a consultative style of leadership produced stronger outcomes than directive or authoritarian styles. (Sorenson & Goethals, 2004)

## Communication

- Pa Has teaching ability ([1 Tim. 3:2](#))
- Pri Leads through use of appropriate symbols ([Exod. 28:2-14](#))
- Pa Speaks out against false messages ([2 Tim. 4:2-5](#); [Tit. 1:9-16](#))
- Pa Passes on heritage to followers ([2 Tim. 2:2](#))



## Communication

Only those who engage in skillful communication can influence others.  
(Hackman & Johnson, 2000, p. 19)





## Communication

Simply put, you have to teach others your vision. **Teaching a vision—and confirming that the vision is shared—is a process of engaging constituents in conversations about their lives, about their hopes and dreams.** Remember that leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue. (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 143)



Connecting People and Purpose

## Communication

Sergiovanni (1992) introduces the concept of substitutes for leadership, arguing that it is counterproductive for a leader to assume the burden of motivating followers primarily through rewarding good behavior. He postulates that followers are more likely to perform tasks that they perceive to be inherently valuable, or that fit somehow into the scheme of community obligations.



Connecting People and Purpose

## Communication

By relying on these two sources of motivation, says Sergiovanni, leaders can influence behavior with less resistance and direct effort. Examples of substitutes for leadership include professional ideals, community norms, and collegiality. It is important to note that these substitutes will not work unless the leader uses appropriate communication.



## Lifelong learning

- Pa** Knows and continues to learn the Scriptures ([2 Tim. 3:14-17](#))
- K** Reads God's law daily ([Deut. 17:18-19](#))
- A** Grows through final stages of leadership ([2 Tim. 4:9-13, 19-21; Tit. 3:12](#))



## Lifelong learning

Supervisors should be enthusiastic about and excited by the possibility of contributing to another person's growth and development; **there can be no more rewarding activity for a supervisor than the development of people.** (Fuller, 1994, as cited in McAbee, 2002, p. 38)



## Ideas for growth

- Serve before seeking to lead
- Study the subject of leadership
  - contemporary literature
  - lives of noteworthy leaders
  - Scriptures (OT history, ministry of Jesus, pastoral epistles, etc.)
- Listen—to seasoned leaders, subordinates, mentors, colleagues, etc.





## Ideas for growth

- Cultivate relationships that invite others to offer you constructive criticism
- Examine yourself
  - in the light of the Scriptures
  - in the light of others' input
  - with the aid of various instruments (MBTI, TJTA, Leadership Grid®, etc.)

Connecting People and Purpose



## Ideas for growth

- Volunteer for a leadership role
- Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance and empowering

Connecting People and Purpose

## References

- Budd, J. (1998). *The academic library: Its context, its purpose, and its operation*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited. Retrieved May 13, 2004, from NetLibrary database.
- Bull, S. I. (2000). *Managerial styles of library directors in institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities*. Doctoral dissertation, Simmons College. Abstract retrieved June 1, 2004, from Dissertation Abstracts Online database.
- Delivuk, J. A. (1999). The biblical doctrine of service and some implications for librarians. *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]*, 42, 5-9+.
- Doncevic, J. (2003). Servant-leadership as a model for library administration. *Catholic Library World*, 73, 171-78.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1991). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. New York: Paulist Press. (Original work published 1977)
- Hackman, M. Z., & Johnson, C. E. (2000). *Leadership: A communication perspective* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.



## References

- Johnson, J. (1985). Serving the student staff. *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]*, 28, 35-36+.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2002). *The leadership challenge* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- McAbee, P. (2002, May/June). Library leadership IQ: What good managers know. *Book Report*, 21, 38-39. Retrieved April 16, 2004, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Miller, G. (1981). A Christian philosophy of librarianship. *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]* 24, 81-82+.
- Nicole, R. R. (1982). The spiritual dimension of the librarian's task. *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]*, 25, 106-114.
- Riga, P. (1962). Towards a theology of librarianship? *The Catholic Library World*, 34, 542-44+.
- Riggs, D. E. (1998). Visionary leadership. In T. F. Mech & G. B. McCabe (Eds.), *Leadership and academic librarians* (pp. 55-65). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.



## References

- Sanders, J. O. (1967). *Spiritual leadership*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Smith, G. A. (2002). The core virtue of Christian librarianship. *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]* 45, 46-51.
- Sorenson, G. J., & Goethals, G. R. (2004). Leadership theories: Overview. In G. J. Sorenson & G. R. Goethals (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of leadership* (Vol. 2, pp. 867-874). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tannenbaum, R., & Schmidt, W. H. (1973). How to choose a leadership pattern. *Harvard Business Review*, 51, 162-180. Retrieved May 12, 2004, from Business Source Premier database. (Reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, 36, 1958, 95-101)
- Terhune, S. (2002). The impact of the Christian faith on library service. In G. A. Smith (Ed.), *Christian Librarianship: Essays on the Integration of Faith and Profession* (pp. 55-68). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. (Reprinted from *The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]*, 26, 1982, 4-6+)

