

Philosophy of Ministry

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Clinton defines "Leadership as a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward his purposes for the group. Contrary to the popular notion, a leader must have a formal position, title, or training. Many called to lead in church or parachurch organizations, such as pastors or directors, may have no formal titles. They may be Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, or laypeople in other leadership capacities. To be considered a leader, one does not require a professional position or a full-time Christian worker.

All leaders operate from a ministry philosophy. However, that philosophy may need to be revised, or it may be simplistic. It may be implicit and not explicit. Influential leaders can articulate much of their ministry philosophy. Ministry philosophy results from leadership emergence—the ideas, values, and principles, whether implicit or explicit, that a leader uses as guidelines for decision-making, exercising influence, or evaluating ministry. (P.157) As leaders experience process items, whether spiritual formation (character building) or ministerial formation (ministry skills), they learn from them. These lessons form a growing reservoir of wisdom leaders use in the future. Some lessons are more explicit; others are implicit. (155).

Christ's commission in Matthew 28:18-20 is not just for the Church collectively; I think it is for every disciple. So my mission as a Christian is to make disciples wherever God puts me. I enjoy doing home repairs and renovations. I constantly seek opportunities to share the Gospel. I do not wait only on Sunday.

Making disciples are not restricted to an appointed day of the week. The more I learn to believe God's word that he is working all things for my good (Romans 8:28). The more I place my daily hope in that promise (Colossians 1:21- 23), the more I'm freed from fixating on my selfish

desires (James 1:15). I have room in my heart to care about somebody else (Philippians 2:4). In other words, when biblical transformation happens in my heart, relational connections happen in my life.

Leaders must develop a ministry philosophy that simultaneously honors biblical leadership values, embraces the challenges of the times in which they live, and fits their unique gifts and personal development if they expect to be productive over a lifetime.

Describe your philosophy of ministry.

To make disciples of Jesus Christ, baptize them, and teach them to walk in the obedience of Faith (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:5).

His message is evident in his statement that everything in Christian ministry must be about the primary goal of making disciples, followers of Christ. His message is comprehensive because he teaches that being a disciple is grounded in his authority, identity, commands, and presence. In other words, Jesus does not call the Pastor to do anything on his own but to do everything in and through the power and presence of Christ to make people like Him. In his epistle to the Romans, Paul espouses my philosophy "to bring about the obedience of Faith among the nations. These words stand as the first and most important goal: make disciples.

To equip and empower disciples to do ministry work (Ephesians 4:11-16).

My instinct is to do, not delegate. So one of the more significant developments in my ministry so far was when the Lord pressed on me these verses from Ephesians 4. I'm sure to some, it is obvious, but to me, it has been life-changing to begin thinking that my calling as a leader is not to do as much "work of the ministry" as possible. Instead, it's to provide opportunities for others to serve

and grow in areas where God has gifted and equipped them for ministry. Jesus Christ came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45), so at heart, making disciples is the goal of helping every member of the Body find a meaningful place to serve that helps them and others grow in the grace of God and live in the obedience of Faith. Before I stepped into the interim senior pastor role at Crossroads, I tried to put feet on this goal in a few ways:

1. By allowing regular opportunities for our two lay worship leaders to use and develop their gifts for planning and leading worship
2. By creating administrative roles in the music ministry
3. By initiating a weekly shepherding group to help equip and empower our ministry leaders

Personal Ministry Mission Statement:

I am a naturally compassionate person and passionate about Christ. My life's mission in the preaching of God's Word and pastoring God's people is to help point others back to Jesus Christ, understand and grow in their Faith, love the community of believers, serve the world by Christ's example, encourage God's people to rely on him in humble repentance and tremendous fear of God, and for God's people to learn more about the historical and diverse Christian Faith, the world and cultures all around them, and to think harder on what it means to be a Christian in every aspect of life in this world.

Family mission and vision:

I am a passionate, all-in family that seeks to impact our community and our world by living the Gospel in our everyday relationships and seeking authentic friendships with other families, both inside the Church and out. We love active outdoor recreation and seek to cultivate an

appreciation for God's creativity in the world around us. We now reach out to our community via quarterly outreach to address some specific challenges. We are working to sustain and nurture that appetite through regular outreach with other ministries.

What are perceived strengths?

Clinton highlights two opposite mistakes in viewing leadership emergence. One is to attach a mystique to Leadership that says, in effect, God calls leaders. Leaders are born. There is nothing we can do about it. The opposite is to say that leaders are made with the proper techniques. We can produce them. It is always true that God gives Leadership to his Church and his Kingdom promotion.

The making of a leader looks for emergent patterns that can speak to lifelong learners as they undertake their leadership journals. Its foundational assumption is that God directs the development of the character to lead, gifts individuals to lead, and directs the application of their Leadership gifting toward fruitful ministry. Providing the emergent leader does not shortcut the process. Character matters to God, and that is where the development process begins. God will first work on your identity before working on what you do. God processes a person by bringing activities, people, and problems into the life of the leaders. Leaders can plateau. Leaders can also stall at a stage in their development, failing to learn the intended lessons.

Using the Clifton Strengths assessment for Leaders, the report clarifies my role and strength.

1. **Significance:** I look for opportunities to do meaningful work where I can help others raise the bar.
2. **Futuristic:** Share the visions of a better future.

3. **Individualization:** I appreciate the uniqueness of each person I meet.
4. **Focus:** I Set specific goals with timelines to motivate myself.
5. **Maximizer:** I Strive for excellence and encourage others to do the same.
6. **Strategic:** I Always have at least three options in mind so I can adapt if circumstances change.
7. **Learner:** I learn with a passion for adding personal value and enhancing those in my contact sphere.
8. **Achiever:** I bring intensity and report to the essential areas of life.
9. **Responsibility:** I take ownership of the things that matter most to you.
10. **Belief:** I honor and value my team during tough times.

What are perceived weaknesses?

I identify with Clinton's statement about struggling with submissions and the conflict in ministry. We cannot disconnect the struggle with submission to authority and the conflict phase in developing a leader. A developing leader will usually struggle with someone in authority over him. Learning submission is critical to the development of a leader. Submission to authority is an essential element in the development of leaders. As a leader, submission to authority should be instantaneous.

Further, Clinton pinpoints that conflict in ministry requires discernment skills. In addition, conflict can arise from different approaches to ministry and from personality clashes. Clinton admonishes us to handle conflicts godly. Another concept that I took out is trusting God for provision.

My leadership style comes through in everything I do. With my role comes great responsibility, which means I will need to use my strengths to focus on the organization's details while also being

able to see everything holistically. I need help with time management and following the date line. Clinton's book provides a detailed, *six-stage leadership emergence theory*.

The six stages are:

- sovereign foundations,
- inner-life growth,
- ministry maturing,
- life maturing, and
- convergence.

What implications does your philosophy have for you as a leader?

The purpose of every Christian is to be a priest. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.

As a ministerial leader, my role is not to be served, but to serve, just as Jesus Christ came to serve the world. — Matthew 20:26–28 (ESV): "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Ministers are to care for the community of believers by praying on their behalf, praying with them, and praying for them alongside them. — James 5:13–16 (ESV): Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of Faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him. Moreover, if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray

for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Love God best is to love and serve others on God's behalf.

As a leader, I will guide like a shepherd (Jeremiah 3:15: 1 Peter 5:1-3)

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised to give his people shepherds after his own heart, who would feed them with knowledge and understanding. With the coming of the Good Shepherd and his apostles after him, God kept his promise and continues to keep it as he raises up new shepherds for every generation of his Church. As perhaps the first church elder (Matthew 16:16-18), the apostle Peter summarizes the shepherding role of the Pastor as exercising oversight willingly and eagerly without seeking power or personal gain.

My implication will focus on four areas:

- **Knowing the Sheep**

This ministry begins with knowing to whom we are assigned. Jesus places a high value on membership as the practical means of knowing his sheep.

- **Feeding the Sheep**

My concern must never be to declare truth for truth's sake but to apply it to our lives to nourish our souls and give us spiritual (and sometimes physical) strength.

- **Leading the Sheep**

A shepherd goes before the flock, facing enemies first and walking the paths they are to walk. The corporate vision and Leadership, as well as the personal example set by the Pastor, are to be exercised willingly and eagerly, not under compulsion or for personal gain. Peter says to exercise oversight "as God would have you."

- **Protecting the Sheep**

Protect the sheep from dangers outside the Church, like cultural influences and temptations.

Reprioritizing:

For a few years, I have neglected to prioritize that God primarily works in the leader. Clinton calls my attention to reprioritize and allow God to work in me. God is concerned with what we are

In addition, Clinton addresses the "*Integrity Check* "A successful integrity check results in a more decisive leader able to serve God in the broader sphere of influence. An integrity check tests inner character for consistency. As a result of reading this book, I commit to implementing Integrity and Obedience Checks in my leadership journey.

Mentoring/ Training of prospect leaders/ Accountability

Mentors. God has given some people the capacity and the heart to see leadership potential and take private and personal action to help the potential leader develop. That action usually becomes a form of significant guidance for the potential leader. Mentoring refers to the process where a person with a serving gives an encouraging attitude to the mentor. Sees leadership potential in a still-to-be-developed person, the protege or mentor, and can promote or otherwise significantly influence the protege to realize potential. Mentoring process item refers to the process and results of a mentor helping a potential leader.

As a result of reading this book, I have listed the few emerging leaders I would like to mentor. I have the gift of encouragement, mercy-giving exhortation, Faith, word of wisdom, and other spiritual gifts. A leader who wishes to have long-term influence must learn how to

implement. *Change* is an important skill involving learning how to relate to superiors, colleagues, and subordinates in organizational structures. Conflict management skills are especially needed in middle and later ministry development. Other skills God concentrates on in the training stage include word skills, Bible study methods, and Bible communication skills. As mentioned earlier, leadership gifts always include a word gift skill to enhance this gift essentially.

God is constantly training all leaders, but not all of them learn from the training. This is particularly true in informal training, which occurs in everyday life, and non-formal training drops. Seminars or conferences. In order to learn. A leader needs to analyze specific instances in which formal or informal training has occurred. All leaders can influence. God wants to develop that capacity over a lifetime. Leaders often reach a point in the later stages of the ministry maturing phase where their development seems to be arrested. "The plateau barrier." Leaders tend to cease developing once they have some skills and ministry experience. They may be content to continue their ministry without discerning the need to develop further. When a leader has potential for Leadership that is not yet developed or used, God will challenge that leader to take steps to develop and use that capacity for his purposes. Often, a leader is unaware of his capacity until God brings guidance through people or events to encourage him toward development.

A leader who has learned major maturity lessons exercises ministry with a new level of spiritual authority. A mature leader flows from a mature character.

Clinton admonishes a leader to remain students of God's word and other significant topics relevant to the leader's overall growth.

Conclusion

As a leader is not how we start; most time, the emphasis is on how we finish. Finishing well is essential for leaders. Clinton explored most facets of the making of a Leader with a wide range of personal experience and leadership principles.

"Ministry flows from being." Influential leaders at all levels of Leadership maintain a learning posture throughout life. Leaders must develop a ministry philosophy that simultaneously honors biblical leadership values, embraces the challenges of the times in which they live, and fits their unique gifts and personal development if they expect to be productive over a lifetime. After reading the book, I have been inspired and guided in updating my ministry philosophy.

For instance, Clinton claims, "Burnout among pastors and others in ministry is increasing. Many drop out after three to four years" (Kindle, 802). A primary function of all Leadership is that of selection of rising Leadership. Leaders must continually be aware of God's processing of younger leaders and work with that process.

Jesus still calls people to follow him and to influence many others," **The Great Commission Mandate.**" As we mature in our Leadership, we must recognize that God will use us as divine contacts and mentors for others.

I have been working with an accountability group for men. It is a perfect way to find a mentor who will hold you accountable in your spiritual life and ministry and who can warn and advise you to enable you to avoid pitfalls and grow. Throughout your time in the ministry

References:

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Gallup (2022) Strength Finder.