

# Caring Connections

An Inter-Lutheran Journal for Practitioners and Teachers of Pastoral Care and Counseling



*Ministries of Management and Leadership*

## The Purpose of Caring Connections

*Caring Connections: An Inter-Lutheran Journal for Practitioners and Teachers of Pastoral Care and Counseling* is written by and for Lutheran practitioners and educators in the fields of pastoral care, counseling, and education. Seeking to promote both breadth and depth of reflection on the theology and practice of ministry in the Lutheran tradition, *Caring Connections* intends to be academically informed, yet readable; solidly grounded in the practice of ministry; and theologically probing. *Caring Connections* seeks to reach a broad readership, including chaplains, pastoral counselors, seminary faculty and other teachers in academic settings, clinical educators, synod and district leaders, others in specialized ministries and — not least — concerned congregational pastors and laity.

*Caring Connections* also provides news and information about activities, events and opportunities of interest to diverse constituencies in specialized ministries.

## Scholarships

When the Inter Lutheran Coordinating Committee disbanded a few years ago, the money from the “Give Something Back” Scholarship Fund was divided between the ELCA and the LCMS. The ELCA has retained the name “Give Something Back” for their fund, and the LCMS calls theirs “The SPM Scholarship Endowment Fund.” These endowments make a limited number of financial awards available to individuals seeking ecclesiastical endorsement and certification/credentialing in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and clinical education.

Applicants must:

- have completed one [1] unit of CPE.
- be rostered or eligible for active roster status in the ELCA or the LCMS.
- not already be receiving funds from either the ELCA or LCMS national offices.
- submit an application, along with a financial data form, for committee review.

Applicants must complete the Scholarship Application forms that are available from Judy Simonson [ELCA] or Joel Hempel [LCMS]. Consideration is given to scholarship requests after each application deadline, August 15 and February 15. Email items to Judith Simonson at [jsimonson@aol.com](mailto:jsimonson@aol.com) and to Joel Hempel at [Joel.Hempel@lcms.org](mailto:Joel.Hempel@lcms.org).

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## Call for Articles

*Caring Connections* seeks to provide Lutheran Pastoral Care Providers the opportunity to share expertise and insight with the wider community. We want to invite anyone interested in writing an article to please contact the editors, Rev. Chuck Weinrich ([cweinrich@cfl.rr.com](mailto:cweinrich@cfl.rr.com)) or Rev. Diane Greve ([dkgreve@gmail.com](mailto:dkgreve@gmail.com)). This call is a regular item in each issue of *Caring Connections*, but we are particularly intentional as we invite articles for upcoming issues on the following themes.

**2016, No. 4 (Winter) “Prayer”** Do you have a pastoral experience in which prayer was an important component? Are you willing to write a reflection on prayer, or do you have a unique opinion about the use of prayer in pastoral ministry? We welcome your input.

**2017, No. 1 (Spring) “Zion XVI”** We plan to include transcripts of the major presentations from the conference. Do you have a reflection or opinion about the conference? Please consider writing an article for us. We want to hear from you!

**2017, No. 2 (Summer) “Ministry with Immigrants”** Are you involved in pastoral work that involves immigrants? Please consider writing about it and contact either Diane or Chuck for details.

## Editorial

**I RECALL THE TROUBLE** Moses had in developing an effective means by which to function as leader of the Children of Israel after he had led them out of Egypt. His father-in-law, Jethro, came to his aide, according to Exodus 18. Jethro taught Moses how to manage his work by delegating his authority in order to achieve success in his calling.

I also recall my own struggles as Director of Pastoral Care at Overlook Hospital in Summit, NJ back in the 1980's. I had inherited a well-run department, so I didn't have to create from scratch, like Moses, but I still struggled with sorting out my priorities, discerning the right balance between my love for personal visitation with patients and families, my love of the CPE program — both process and students — and meeting my obligations within the hospital administration. I remember sitting next to the director of the X-ray Department in a budget meeting with several other department heads. At one point he asked me what my annual budget for pastoral care was and, when I told him, he chuckled and said, "That's how much I spend on x-ray film in a week!" Even though we weren't a very large department, I still wrestled with seeing my administrative work as part of my call to ministry.

Moses and I aren't the only ones who have ever had to learn to integrate our managerial tasks with our sense of calling to ministry. This issue of *Caring Connections* addresses these concerns. We have some contributors who help us look at the challenge of a call to a ministry of management and leadership.

- **Kurt Senske**, the Chief Executive Officer of Upbring [formerly called the Lutheran Social Services of the South], located in Austin, TX, shares some lessons he's learned about leadership as a ministry. Kurt is a former contributor to *Caring Connections*, having written an article in the initial issue of *Caring Connections*, Fall 2004, focused on "God and Suffering."
- **Beth Lewis**, President and CEO of 1517 Media, formerly known as Augsburg Fortress Publishing Co. in Minneapolis, MN, sends along her thoughts about the vocation of leadership.
- **Mark Whitsett**, Director of Pastoral Care for Cedar Lake in Louisville, KY, shares his thoughts on reframing pastoral care to include administrative responsibilities, integrating multiple service roles into one's sense of calling as a pastor/chaplain.
- **Steve Hokana**, Associate Director of Ministry to the Armed Forces for the LCMS, draws from his years of experience as a military chaplain to look at the ministry of leadership from his distinctive perspective, as well as adding a section regarding Luther's comments on the six Works of God as descriptors of pastoral leadership. Steve previously wrote an article for *Caring Connections* in the 2007, No.3 issue describing ministry with veterans suffering from PTSD.
- **Sondra Weinzierl**, a parish nurse in the Twin Cities, reviews the book, *Race for Relevance* as a resource for Lutheran managers and leaders.

- **Joel Hempel**, Interim Director of Specialized Pastoral Ministries for the LCMS, and
- **Judy Simonson**, part-time ELCA, both share descriptions of their ministries of leadership and administration within the two denominations.

We hope you will find insight and encouragement from these articles as you continue with your own challenges in ministry, regardless of the particular field in which you are engaged.

**A WARM WELCOME!** We are delighted to welcome Diane Greve as the new ELCA co-editor of *Caring Connections*! Diane has recently retired after serving as a CPE supervisor with Fairview Health Services in Minneapolis and manager of the Fairview CPE Center. She is a consecrated deaconess of the Lutheran Deaconess Association and ordained Word and Sacrament minister of the ELCA. She has served as a MCPCCE Regional Representative for the ELCA, on the Inter Lutheran Coordinating Council for Specialize Pastoral Care and on numerous Zion planning committees. Diane enjoys living in Minneapolis, Minnesota with her two adult children and four grandchildren nearby. We look forward to having Diane’s commitment to our unique ministries applied within the pages of *Caring Connections*!

**PHOTOGRAPHY.** Is this one of your passionate interests in life (otherwise called by the uninitiated a “hobby”)? Diane and Chuck would like to invite those of you who are interested in photography and have particular photographs that you think might enhance our articles or even the cover page of future issues of *Caring Connections*, we encourage you to contact either one of us and send us your photos. We promise to integrate your contributions in as meaningful a manner as possible, and we will acknowledge you as the person who took any photograph we use. To help you decide which photos to send us, these are the topics for future issues:

- 2016, No. 4 – “Prayer”
- 2017, No. 1 – “Zion XVI” (we have a number of photos already, but are open to reviewing others for inclusion as well)
- 2017, No. 2 – “Ministry with Immigrants”

We look forward to receiving your response to our invitation!

**TOPICS.** What concerns would you like to have us address in future issues of *Caring Connections*? While our Editorial Board is very active and resourceful in helping us develop topics and writers, we are open to your suggestions as well. Contact either Diane Greve ([dkgreve@gmail.com](mailto:dkgreve@gmail.com)) or Chuck Weinrich ([cweinrich@cfl.rr.com](mailto:cweinrich@cfl.rr.com)).

# Lessons Learned in 20 Years of Leadership

**Kurt Senske**

**FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS**, God has blessed me with the privilege of serving as the Chief Executive Officer of Upbring, formerly called the Lutheran Social Services of the South. During this time, I am certain that I was as much of a student as teacher. This truth resounded in my thoughts a few weeks ago as I participated in a values exercise with other Upbring leaders.

The purpose of that critical exercise was to pinpoint the core values that support Upbring's mission and vision in a manner that would shape employee culture and impact millions of children and families throughout Texas. Just as a responsible person should rely on their moral compass when faced with weighty decisions, the leaders of an organization must never forget the underlying standards that can lead to the realization of its mission, especially when faith inspires and drives the existence of that organization.

After a thorough conversation involving the spirit of Upbring's employees and their desire to protect, champion, encourage, and love the families they serve, my team and I were able to sum up the identity of Upbring into three sentences. **We are warriors. We are servants. We are family.** Short, yet not at all simplistic, these phrases ring true for every position within the organization.

For me personally, these values extend to more than Upbring. The desire to live as a warrior, servant, and a faithful family member pulses through the marrow of all Christ-centered leaders. Being a Christian leader in an increasingly post-Christian world is not without its challenges. However, it is our Christian faith that also provides us with a unique advantage.

When our relationship with God is strong, we intuitively understand that it is our faith that influences the intensity of our daily living. It allows us to look beyond our ego. We are able to wear braveness like a well-tailored suit, lay aside ego and make bold decisions for the benefit of others. We can do this because, when our faith is strong, we are no longer constrained to be successful in this life. Instead, we have the opportunity to glorify the One who leads with perfection by lifting others up and making a significant impact on their lives.

As I reread the Upbring statement of values, I am reminded of several poignant lessons I have learned about what it truly means to be a leader. It is my honor to share them with you.

## **Leaders dive into the trenches.**

*"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:16*

Leaders show up day after day with humility, integrity, and a servant heart being the habitual rhythm of their movements. They do not subscribe to the mindset of

“that job is beneath me.” In fact, leaders will do whatever job necessary to keep their organization moving toward its mission.

### Leaders follow the Golden Rule.

*“So in everything, do to others, what you would have them do to you.” Matthew 7:12*

I have found that by following the Golden Rule, a leader is able to effortlessly incorporate the Gospel values of love, honesty, respect, and justice into their daily decision making and actions. Following the Golden Rule adds lasting value in that it is other-directed, not self-centered. It builds people up as opposed to using them up; it allows people to envision new possibilities rather than seeing themselves and the world as unchangeable; it invites decision making based on one’s own values; and it allows everyone within the organization to reveal their inner ideologies without forcing others to conform to the beliefs of others.

### Leaders exude confidence but shun arrogance.

*“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.” Romans 12:3*

God gifts everyone He creates with talents. That said, we then must have confidence that God gave us these gifts to fulfill His purpose and it is our responsibility to lead with confidence knowing that He is with us and will be faithful to complete the good works he started — we just need to be faithful with what we are given. However, we must be careful not to cross the thin-as-dental-floss line between confidence and arrogance. Knowing that we will never fully utilize the talents that God has entrusted to us is what allows us an opportunity to improve.

### Leaders appreciate and celebrate diversity.

*“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:4–5*

Embracing diversity at every level of the organization has made me a more effective leader. Advancing organizational diversity — while intentionally articulating one’s personal and organizational values — does not dilute, but rather serves to strengthen an organization’s mission. Taking the time to walk in someone else’s shoes, one who may embrace a different religion, ethnic background, or lifestyle, provides us with a unique opportunity to truly “love your neighbor.”

### Leaders accept critique.

*“Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed” Proverbs 15:22*

The only perfect person who lived, served, and led a passionate following on this earth sacrificed His life for humankind more than 2,000 years ago. All leaders this side of heaven are going to be wrong at times and it's important they surround themselves with people who aren't afraid to tell them when they've made a mistake. I certainly do not preclude myself from this painful reality, and have a team of trusted confidants who provide unvarnished critique — allowing me time for appropriate reflection, repentance when required, and adjustment.

### Leaders embrace change.

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*  
*Deuteronomy 31:6*

When I reached my 50's I discovered a fork in the road. I was either doomed to middle-aged mediocrity while a younger, ambitious, technology-infused generation passed me by. Or, I could take a step back, acknowledge my shortcomings, and reinvent myself as a grace-filled child of God and leader. For me, this meant intentionally incorporating habits of health into my lifestyle, purposefully recommitting to my professional calling, and acknowledging that I can learn from younger colleagues.

### Leaders confront injustice.

*“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”*  
*1 Corinthians 4:2*

Within minutes of meeting me, my colleagues rightly assess that my leadership style imitates that of a diplomat and not a tyrant. However, at the sight of blatant injustice, a righteous fire will race through me faster than a cheetah chasing down breakfast. Leaders who follow Christ possess zero tolerance for bullying, discrimination, dishonesty, and suppression. On the contrary, Christian leaders use their authority to protect, guide, and empower others. Our God-given calling provides us with a unique perspective, in the words of the prophet Micah, to live a life that is humble, merciful, and just.

### Leaders serve.

*“Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”*  
*Colossians 3:24*

Leadership is never a title. And how many people we manage, or how large a budget we have, is irrelevant. What matters is how well we serve those whom God has placed in our path. This is an important distinction. When we ignore the “what” and concentrate on the “how,” we are able to move beyond our ego and focus outward on answering the question, “Who have I been called to serve?” This, at its core, is the essence of leadership.



### Leaders rest and refuel.

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

*Matthew 11:28–30*

Leadership is both a marathon and a sprint. Engaged, successful leaders will experience at least 200 days a year where, by the end of the day, they are almost literally brought to their knees in exhaustion and often frustration. Left solely to their own devices, leaders will eventually burn out, suffer physically, emotionally and spiritually, and often ignore faith and family relationships that matter most. Effective leaders care for themselves. We do this by strengthening our relationship with God, implementing rituals that include regular exercise and habits of health and moderation. We do this by remembering we do not rest because our work is done; we rest because God commanded it and created us to have a need for it.

### Leaders live in today and invest in tomorrow.

*“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

*1 Corinthians 15:58*

Leaders think about both today and tomorrow. Not only are we called to serve well today; we must also continually disrupt and reinvent an organization that is prepared to meet the needs of tomorrow. Leadership understands when to gracefully exit the stage. With the ultimate vision to leave an organization better off than when you started, succession planning should always be front and center – something extremely difficult to accomplish and for our fragile egos to accept. It may mean selflessly sharing power with talented colleagues and possibly even turning over the mantle of leadership to another sooner than you might prefer.

As you continue on your own leadership journey I urge you to give daily to God the best of what you have to offer. Leadership is not a destination, but rather an ongoing journey of transformation as we disown ourselves and follow Christ’s calling within us.



*Dr. Kurt Senske lives in Austin, Texas, where he serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Upbring, the new Lutheran Social Services of the South. He is the author of a number of books including, Wine and the Word: Savor and Serve; The Calling: Living a Life of Significance; and Executive Values: A Christian Approach to Organizational Leadership.*

# The Vocation of Leadership

Beth A. Lewis

**IN A SERMON IN 1529**, Martin Luther said, “Therefore, the Christian life is not about what the monks claim ... that it means sending people in the wilderness or cloister. On the contrary, the Christian life leads you to those who need your works.”

One of the many gifts of the Reformation that we recognize as we enter the 500th anniversary year of this world-shifting series of events is the gift of Martin Luther’s framing of vocation. In the 16th century, to have a vocation was only understood to mean being called to serve as a religious person for the Church ... a priest or monk or nun. But, Luther said that Christian vocations were in multiple spheres: The Church? Yes! But also in the home and in the larger community or civic realm.

Twenty-first century Lutherans and other Christians are more likely to say that vocation is in four quadrants: Church, Home, Career and Civic. In Luther’s day, “home” and “career” were one and the same! If you were a farmer, that was your work and your home. If you were a tanner, that was your work and your home. We are more likely to define those separately today (even if many of us do our professional work from home, at least from time to time!).

This sense of vocation or calling is particularly pertinent for those of us who are administrators leading not-for-profit and faith-based organizations.

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“Vocation is in four quadrants: Church, Home, Career and Civic.”

In my work, as the President and CEO for 1517 Media (the ELCA’s ministry of publishing, and parent organization to Augsburg Fortress, Fortress Press and Sparkhouse), I have had a strong sense of having been called to this work since the moment I first heard about this position in 2002. I felt that my life prior to that point as a very active life-long Lutheran raised in a not-very-Lutheran part of the country [Lexington, KY], combined with 20+ years of varied work for a number of Fortune 500 publishing companies, and being an entrepreneur owner of a computer and technology career school was a path that prepared me for this leadership role.

I have found that as a layperson working as an executive in a faith-based business organization, linking my work with a sense of call has been helpful for others as they try to understand that my work stands on the sometimes challenging tightrope between business and ministry.

So, as a leader of an organization on this ministry/business tightrope, how do I lead as a faithful Christian?

## The Power of Prayer

Throughout my career in secular organizations, I always prayed for wisdom and guidance when I needed to make a challenging decision. One of the joys of working

in a faith-based organization is that my prayer can also be communal! Our executive staff begins our meetings with prayer. We host regular all-staff update meetings and those always begin with an opening devotion and prayer, led by various colleagues, often using one of our recently published resources. Our Board of Trustees meetings include a meeting chaplain who leads us in devotions, prayer and include a time of worship. I also invite others across the Church to pray for our ministry of publishing as they include other parts of the Church in their prayers. As someone who believes deeply in the power of prayer, I believe that this makes a positive difference in our work together.

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"One of the joys of working in a faith-based organization is that my prayer can also be communal!"

### The Stockdale Paradox

I think it is critically important that as leaders of faith-based organizations, we begin by recognizing the realities of our contexts. Admiral Jim Stockdale, who survived 8 years as the highest ranking American prisoner of war during the Viet Nam War, is credited with crafting the concept now known as the Stockdale Paradox: the need to have faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, while at the same time, confronting the most brutal facts of your current reality. It seems to me that this is an apt way to analyze the environments in which many leaders of not-for-profit and faith-based organizations find themselves.

In the case of 1517 Media, we primarily serve congregations (a shrinking market) and higher education in the fields of religion and theology. Also, we are in the publishing industry, which has been going through rapid changes in the past couple of decades as our sales channels have largely migrated away from brick and mortar stores to the web. And, while digital delivery of content may seem ubiquitous, many people still want ink-on-paper resources. These are only two of the major challenges we face. I'm sure you can easily name the challenges within your own industry/place of ministry. But, no matter what type of organization you lead, thinking about your context in terms of the Stockdale Paradox is essential.

### The Stockdale Paradox



## Listen Deeply

Listening takes place intentionally—both internally and externally—through one-on-one conversations, small group listening posts, formal market research, ethnographic research and paying attention to social media conversations among our core constituents. I am often so inspired by what we hear from both our colleagues and those we serve! They teach me a great deal. Occasionally, I also find that this deep listening helps head off misinformation.

## Communicate a Clear Vision

One of the essential skills for leaders is in the communication of a clear and consistent vision regarding the organization’s mission and priorities.

Since people learn in different ways, sometimes this communication should be verbal, sometimes in writing, sometimes with pictures or video. And, while as a leader it often feels as if I have said the same thing over and over and over again, the critical messages can’t be shared with staff and key stakeholders too often. They are all busy people and sometimes miss something I think is important! Or, I haven’t conveyed the message as clearly as I think I have.

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“... we need to innovate, and the best way to do so is to make “small bets” before we make “big bets.”

## Test and Learn

One of our most frequently used phrases at 1517 Media is “test and learn.” By this I mean that we need to innovate, and the best way to do so is to make “small bets” before we make “big bets.” We develop prototypes and ask customers to try them out with the youth in their confirmation class. We publish a few books in a new format and listen to what readers say before we publish more in that format. We provide a free user trial to prospective users of our new web-based subscription products so that they, too, can “test and learn” whether they want to invest in one of our new resources for faith formation.

## Grow, Hold, Fold

The most critical skill that we practice at 1517 Media is in this arena. Grow: Our leadership team constantly thinks about what new resources we should develop, sales and distribution channels we should utilize, in what new technologies should we invest, and how should we nurture top talent and external partnerships in order to grow our business and ministry. Hold: We also analyze which of those same types of things we should continue doing at about the same level as we currently do them. Fold: And, most important of all, over and over again, we have stopped time-honored practices because they were no longer adding enough value to our organization or they were off-strategy. By ceasing this work, we have freed up the time, talent, money, space, and other resources to focus on the critical initiatives that will allow us to grow.

One example of this was when we opted to close our dozen retail bookstores in 2008–9. We received many negative comments at the time from across the ELCA. But, we were monitoring the rapid shift to online sales of published resources and knew that we needed to refocus our financial and human resources away from this sales channel that would never be our core competency and apply our talents to the creation of dynamic, original animated faith formation and digital worship and music resources, initiatives that could become our core competency. These were not easy decisions and there were no guarantees that they were correct at the time we made them. But, hindsight has proven them to be the right ones for us and for our primary customers and partners in ministry.

Leading any organization can be fraught with challenges and concerns that keep leaders up at night. But, with careful attention to some of these key principles, leading organizations can be filled with joy and a deep sense of accomplishment as we focus on serving others in ways that will enrich their lives. In this way, I believe, we will lead organizations for a sustainable future.



*Beth Lewis is the President & CEO of 1517 Media, the parent company for Augsburg Fortress, Fortress Press and Sparkhouse. Prior to assuming this role in 2002, she owned a technology career school for four years. For 22 years before that, she worked for several Fortune 500 publishing companies. Under her leadership, 1517 Media has provided innovative leadership in the creation of print and digital resources for the Church. She is a popular keynote speaker and workshop leader on topics such as turning around faith-based organizations for the 21st century, effective use of technology by congregations, and congregational hospitality.*

# Domains We Live By: Re-Framing Pastoral Care in Multiple Service Agency Roles

Mark Whitsett

**A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO**, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson launched their groundbreaking work in communications, *Metaphors We Live By*.<sup>1</sup> Their research described how we as people unconsciously use forms of expression that shape the way we think about something. These expressions rely heavily on a word picture or metaphor that connects us to a concept or a “sense” that is largely assumed as valid. For example, we may think of “Life as a Journey;” or that “Time is Money;” “Argument is War;” or “Ideas are Objects;” or, one that gets my attention, “Linguistic Expressions are Containers.”

Let’s try these last two on for size! We may have a container, say, “Pastoral Care” into which we place certain ideas (objects) that are “contained” in pastoral care. The ideas that we put into the pastoral care container might include listening, caring, empathy, giving support, praying, sharing hope in Word and Sacrament or even being aware of self as one gives care in the transaction. Some of us would certainly add a number of other ideas or even take some away. But I dare say, most if not all would NOT place in our Pastoral Care Container ideas like administrator, legal advocate, manager, strategic planner, human rights reviewer, research consultant (which are all roles that I have filled or currently fill as one who brings Pastoral Care! More about this later!)

Perhaps you might suggest that these latter “ideas” need separate containers or domains into which they properly go. However, the problem is that a “container” or domain assumes that the one thing is discreet or distinctive from the other thing. Today, for example, concepts like “sacred” or “secular” are experienced as antithetical to one another, at least in terms of popular usage. Thus Pastoral Care also can have the idea of sacred (that is religious, spiritual or godly) while “business” roles (such as administrator, etc.) are more secular (that is, not having anything to do with the sacred). However, during Reformation times these terms simply delineated church vocations (that is, formal orders) from non-church vocations. Nevertheless, both the sacred and secular were still conceived as godly Christian callings and service.

This seems like a very long explanation but it really helps to frame my ‘journey’ in Pastoral Care as I moved from serving over 28 years in parish ministry to Director

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“The ideas that we put into the pastoral care container might include listening, caring, empathy, giving support, praying, sharing hope in Word and Sacrament or even being aware of self as one gives care in the transaction.”

1 Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By*, University Of Chicago Press; 1st edition (April 15, 2003)

of Pastoral Care for Cedar Lake, a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS and an Affiliate of the ELCA. Cedar Lake has served individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for 40 years in the Greater Louisville Kentucky area. Approximately 260 adults are supported in residential homes, group homes, supported living apartments, intermediate (long term) care medical facilities, and adult day programming in 38 locations across the region. In addition to the people we support and their families, the Pastoral Care Department (which includes two other colleagues) is daily engaged with 430 staff, countless volunteers and board members, and in linking the people we support to the faith community at large. This is what we are about today, but that's not how things started out.

Coming to Cedar Lake a little over nine years ago was at first a crisis in vocational understanding for me. How were my pastoral calling and associated gifts connected to a setting and people that were and are sharply distinctive from parish ministry? The complex relationships and the stark physical, cognitive, medical, emotional and functional needs of the individuals we support challenged my concepts of Pastoral Care. My container was defined by ideas relating to congregation or the pastoral office, and yet here I was in a setting that had (has) "called" me as a pastor. People didn't care if there was a piece of paper on the wall with a bunch of letters behind one's name. One gentleman came into the office one day and looked at the framed degrees and said, "Why do you have these on the wall? They're not even pretty!"

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"The complex relationships and the stark physical, cognitive, medical, emotional and functional needs of the individuals we support challenged my concepts of Pastoral Care."

Folks call me "Pastor Mark." That pastoral identification has grown out of building long term relationships through regular weekly Chapel and devotional ministries; having bible studies with staff; visiting and being present in the comings and goings of everyday living. Whatever that pastoral identity might be from person to person, their reflected sense includes many of the original ideas that we identified above in our pastoral care container. However, the ability to navigate a large, complex organization and still stay close to the people served requires a kind of deliberateness that is not only holistic, relational and centered on the person being supported, but also strategically focused, staying aware of their needs, desires and choices so that an "intentional spiritual care" is possible.

Pastoral Care at Cedar Lake had largely been a chapel-centered ministry that relied heavily on being in one residential location (long term care). However, Cedar Lake by conscience and regulatory requirement moved toward providing a life that more approximated the kind of living that most people experience and expect, such as living in a home, going to school or work, having regular friends, shopping, cooking, cleaning, going to church and the like. As a result, the movement from

chapel-centered to natural community supports has required other kinds of skills, understandings, and approaches for the care that Christ brings to the world through baptized, called, human earthen vessels.

For me it has meant having a greater sense of the persons we support, their families and of the staff who directly work with them. As a result, I became a Qualified Developmental Disability Professional. For a period of seven years, I was the legal advocate for all aspects of care for seven men at one of our facilities. I daily worked with these men, got to know them intimately along with those who were in their lives. To have a sense of their need as person was to be involved with the complexity of ALL their needs. I got to know staff, their joys and frustrations, the challenges to doing 24/7 care. Living and working in this ongoing, nurturing environment develops a kind of kinship that is shaping to all concerned. It was here that I saw how necessary it is to enlist all staff (and, later on, the faith community at large) in the spiritual support of the individuals served. Even if staff has a minimal religious background, training for spiritual care is an appeal to function professionally but also to examine personally the hope that the people we support have in God's love found in Jesus. Simultaneous to this, I was dealing with the regulatory world by serving as the Human Rights Chairperson, assuring that individuals were not experiencing unnecessary restrictions for functioning in their daily lives. This again requires a broader sense of the person and appreciates what is both important for them and also to them. Out of these types of experiences we have developed a better sense of assessment and plan for ongoing spiritual support for each individual.

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"Even if staff has a minimal religious background, training for spiritual care is an appeal to function professionally but also to examine personally the hope that the people we support have in God's love found in Jesus."

About five years ago, a new CEO came to Cedar Lake. He saw and understood that the approach that we were using in the Pastoral Care Department was something that could translate across the organization. He invited Pastoral Care to be a part of senior management (reporting directly to him) and provide pastoral insight, direction and spiritual strategic planning for Cedar Lake. His desire was and is that the Christian values and confession we have historically held would move to the forefront of how we relate to one another and how we prioritize our service to the individuals supported by Cedar Lake. One outcome of this has been a research consultation conducted by our department that focused on possible relational challenges that Cedar Lake wanted to understand more fully. These discussions are directly connected to the trust that Pastoral Care has built over the years with staff, so that they would share openly with us. While consistent with my work in cross-cultural studies and missiology, more important was that this was an opportunity to listen to a large portion of the staff that work at Cedar Lake, hear their hopes and concerns



and to help shape a pathway for responding to one another that is consistent with good and godly practice. This process is currently happening and it is a blessing to see how this is opening doors for ongoing pastoral care.

The vocational understanding of Pastoral Care would not usually include ideas like being in administration or senior manager, being a legal advocate, strategic planner or research consultant. Vocationally, one is always “being” pastor and pastoral, no matter what the duties require. Then too, it is always necessary to challenge myself and say, “What does this have to do with pastoral care?” Is it a distraction or is a pathway for godly conversation, living in hope, serving as the presence of Christ in contexts that often are marginalized to the “secular?” There are no simple replies to such questions because motives can be mixed or even selfish. But even this examination is a part of pastoral care, situating self in the context that also means the context before God revealed in Christ. Nevertheless, I am energized and thankful to serve pastorally in ways that stretch the container to include aspects of the world and life where the sacred rule and grace of God is needed and found.



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# A Lutheran Military Chaplain's Thoughts on Leadership

Steve Hokana

*Mercy and truth preserve the king, and by lovingkindness he upholds his throne.  
[Proverbs 20:28 (NKJV)]*

**THE STUDY AND APPLICATION** of leadership trends, techniques and systems, is a multibillion-dollar industry. Books on leadership/management, materials of all kinds, seem to grow like weeds across the corporate landscape. Resources on leadership in many ways come in fads. A couple of decades ago MBOR (Management by Objectives and Results) was the hottest management technique (leadership method). Although still around, it is mostly used in Nordic countries. Next on the scene were historical and fictional leaders: Sun Tzu, Attila the Hun, Jean-Luc Picard--the fictional captain on Star Trek--The Next Generation) held up as ideals for leadership. Attila the Hun as a leader never seemed appropriate. A voracious hunger for conquest, world domination, and never taking a bath are not viable resources for leading a successful Vacation Bible School program, planning the next training session for chaplains in a major medical center, or moving a church council (*But then again...*).

In all fairness, the challenge of taking leaders out of their historical context and placing them in the modern era leads to mixed results. Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Constantine I, brilliant leaders, would stand trial for war crimes if alive today. Time does not permit an analysis of myriads of leadership seminars. Strong-willed motivational speakers exude techniques (usually finding something in you that 'needs' to bubble to the surface) for successful leadership. From my 'foxhole', as I see it, leadership techniques come and go. Corporations, institutions and individuals chase them down like the Golden Goose or Fountain of Youth, hoping to find the secret 'key' to unlocking leadership success. So many trends, techniques and ideas on leadership. What's a chaplain or pastor to do?

As an Army Chaplain for over a quarter of a century, leadership is in the very fiber of my being. Leadership is trained, exercised, and evaluated at all ranks, in all branches of service. Of its many aspects and components, two leadership dynamics are highlighted: **Areas of Operation** (sometimes referred to as 'AO') and **Situational Awareness**. Both have universal application as pastors, chaplains and anyone charged with the 'care for souls.'

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"A voracious hunger for conquest, world domination, and never taking a bath are not viable resources for leading a successful Vacation Bible School program, planning the next training session for chaplains in a major medical center, or moving a church council (*But then again...*)"

## Areas of Operation

Area of Operation from a military perspective is defined in three ways:

- **Strategic:** to secure national or multinational objectives.
- **Operational:** a series of tactical actions (battles & engagements) coordinated in time and place, to accomplish operational & strategic objectives
- **Tactical:** a small conflict between opposing maneuver forces.<sup>1</sup>

The major difference between the three is resources available, time of engagement, and scope of objective. Not all military actions are combat. Many military operations concern humanitarian missions, and support for nation coalitions.

**STRATEGIC** leadership is global in its reach, using tools and assets that are on a world-wide level. Strategic goals of the military are maintaining open access to sea-lanes, air supremacy so that flights across the globe are unimpeded, or stabilizing a nation to reduce global terrorism. Each requires treaties with other nations, a fully trained Air, Land, and Sea force, and the will to execute national priorities on an international scale.

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“You may not have global reach in your department, but your church, medical center, care facility sees its role in a larger way.”

Don’t underestimate your role. Your organization may be strategic. Understanding the goals of the senior executive leadership in your organization provides clarity in your daily mission. You may not have global reach in your department, but your church, medical center, care facility sees its role in a larger way. Understanding the macroistic view of your organization clarifies your role as you engage others. If you belong to a church body, it is one thing to organize at the congregational and institutional level. But what you do in the local congregation or in the halls of a care facility echoes in the community where you reside and beyond.

**OPERATIONAL** action is a campaign in a defined area of the world. If the United States recognizes open sea-lanes as a strategic priority, an operational action would be to deploy forces into a particular area to accomplish this goal. “Operational” in leadership is where you are a leader to other leaders. This may sound redundant, but caring, mentoring, developing subordinate leaders is a key to an organization’s success.

Typically, in operational leadership, you are not directly in the action; you direct the lower echelon leaders for success. An operational leader makes sure the subordinate leaders are properly resourced with people and equipment. The operational leader is responsible for the success of the strategic mission, while encouraging initiative at the tactical level. As a pastoral care provider in a

<sup>1</sup> Field Manual 3-0, chapter 2. [www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/3-0/ch2.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/fm/3-0/ch2.htm)

medical facility, chaplain in an institution or pastor of a church, it is imperative to see the operational level of the organization. If you are affiliated with a CPE center or undergo JCAHO inspections it's clear how operational leadership is so important. If you don't follow the guidance (intent/orders/rules) of either, you may be suspended from the organization (Strategic) or fail certification as a recognized organization (Strategic).

**TACTICAL** engagement is small, usually conducted at lower levels in the echelon. For our purposes, tactical actions are at the heart of Strategic and Operational goals. Here is how it nests (comes together and interacts). If your health organization (Strategic) instructs hospitals and medical facilities (Operational) to highlight 'compassion' as a way to increase patient/clients, the department of ministry (tactical) will request training time for staff members on self-care, the increased use of volunteers, and making compassion awareness a highlight within the local facility's Department of Pastoral Care. Another term for tactical ministry may be the 'praxis' of pastoral care — where the 'rubber meets the road.'

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"As a pastoral care provider in a medical facility, chaplain in an institution or pastor of a church, it is imperative to see the operational level of the organization."

Understanding the AO levels of an organization helps to further hone your leadership and measurement outcomes of success. An understanding of one's AO is key to integrating any organization. The AO defines your responsibility as well as your sphere of influence.

### Situational Awareness

Situational Awareness is seen in the five "W's" (and an "H") of leadership. Answering the following interrogatives helps you understand your leadership methodologies, interacting with subordinates, and approach to interrelating with the organization.

- **Who** are you in the organization?
- **What** kind of supervisor are you?
- **Where** are your boundaries in leadership? (leader-subordinate relationships)
- **When** are you a leader? (24-7 or 9-5)
- **How** do you lead?
- **Why** are you a leader?

**WHO** are you in the organization? Are you a department chief? Are you on the staff or a contractor? But even more so, what has the director above you told you about who you are in the organization? These four questions are very helpful and necessary to engage in effective leadership in an organization. Further, to work in harmony it is essential to know the priorities of your leader.

**WHAT** kind of supervisor are you? This is a very important introspective dynamic of leadership. Having an understanding of your own motivations, desires, and identity helps motivate your subordinate staff. But there is another side of “What.” The next step in your leadership style is to examine if it truly works. Many of those around you may not have the same motivations and goals. They may not understand your concept of teamwork.

**WHERE** are your boundaries in leadership? In the military most weapons ranges have what is called “range fans.” These are the boundaries that clearly define the target area. Knowing your range fans in an organization keeps it from falling into chaos (horizontal). The human dynamic has additional challenges. Is it an overextension of boundaries to know your co-worker’s children, grandchildren, and spouse?

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*“Who are you in the organization? What kind of supervisor are you? Where are your boundaries in leadership? (leader-subordinate relationships) When are you a leader? (24-7 or 9-5) How do you lead? Why are you a leader?”*

**WHEN** are you a leader? Leadership in the military is a 24-7 occupation. Every day, all day and all week long you are a leader. It is an expectation that your leadership continues even after the workday ends. As a leader there are rules, roles and responsibilities that set you apart from your subordinates and other members of the organization. Many organizations see leadership as a vocation—a “calling,” as opposed to a position in which one can disengage at the close of the day. Second, whether one likes it or not, you are held to a higher standard than others. Most people want a leader they can look up to with admiration and respect. Compromising either category causes a loss of trust, which leads to disaster.

**HOW** do you lead? It would be a bold step in leadership to ask your subordinates, department, or team how you are perceived as a leader. You may assume your style comes across clear and concise while your subordinates may have a different picture altogether. Again, this is a bold step and it is risky, but it could help strengthen working relationships within your organization.

**WHY** are you a leader? God calls us to our vocations. At any time you can walk away from the position of leadership. Pay and salary may be a benefit, but there is much more going on when you ask yourself, “Why.” Are you a person of vision? Do you enjoy problem solving at a team, rather than individual, level? Are you a person who feels you can make a difference? Do you love what you do? Walking through such questions helps answer the “why” of leadership. It also sharpens your skills and keeps you engaged as an effective leader.

Situational Awareness and Areas of Operation are tools to assist one as a leader to focus on the mission of the “Great Commission” given you by our gracious and loving God.

## A Lutheran Perspective

As Lutherans, we also have something to say about leadership. It’s important to approach leadership from the perspective of Martin Luther’s two kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> He also wrote a gift for his leader from, of all places, Mary’s Song, the Magnificat. The next segment of this article is a brief exploration of the “Six Works of God” from Luther’s commentary on the Magnificat, which he wrote to his Prince, John Frederick, and it is highly relevant to the topic of leadership.<sup>3</sup> Luther’s comments on the six “Works of God” from Luke Chapter 1 are gifts worth integrating into our thoughts about leadership.

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“It’s important to approach leadership from the perspective of Martin Luther’s two kingdoms.”

All branches of the military service pride themselves on their values. For example, the US Army has seven values. These Seven Army Values spell out the abbreviation: LDRSHIP.<sup>4</sup> In a similar way of emphasis, Luther drew from “Mary’s Song” what he called the “Six Works of God.” These six works have their place in leadership in every Area of Operation and regardless of one’s personal Situational Awareness. Luther commended to Prince John Fredrick in his commentary on the Magnificat (specifically Luke 1:50–54)<sup>5</sup> the “Six Works of God” for a leader: *“He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.”*

**1. MERCY.** “[God] is merciful to all who are ready to do without their opinion, right, wisdom, and all spiritual goods, and willing to be poor in spirit. These are the ones who truly fear God, who count themselves not worthy of anything.”<sup>6</sup> Luther goes on to describe mercy as God’s “noblest work”. As we encounter people in our workplace, we are called to demonstrate mercy to everyone. I believe Luther is telling his prince, and us, to subordinate who we are and listen to the voice of God within those he places around us.

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2 “Every person is a subject of two kingdoms, one of which is spiritual, the other earthly. The unbeliever is in the kingdom of Satan; the believer belongs to the kingdom of Christ. Both the godly and the ungodly are citizens of an earthly kingdom or country, without any difference in the nature of their citizenship.” (“The Christian: A Citizen Of Two Kingdoms” by J. M. Weidenschilling, M.A., S.T.D., from *Christian Citizenship*, originally published in 1953 by Concordia Publishing House).

3 Luther’s Works Volume 21. The Sermon on the Mount (Sermons) and Magnificat. Pages 265–355. CPH 1956

4 **Loyalty** – Bear true faith and allegiance to the US Constitution, the US Army, your unit, and other soldiers. **Duty** – Fulfill your obligations. **Respect** – Treat people as they should be treated. **Selfless Service** – Put the welfare of the nation, the US Army, and your subordinates before your own. **Honor** – Live up to US Army values. **Integrity** – Do what’s right, legally and morally. **Personal Courage** – Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral).

5 Luther’s Works, Idem, pages 332-349.

6 Luther’s Works, Idem, page 339.

**2. BREAKING SPIRITUAL PRIDE.** In the earlier section on Mercy, Luther writes, “No rich or mighty man is so puffed up and bold as one such *smart aleck* who feels and knows that he is right, understands all about a matter, and is wiser than other people.”<sup>7</sup> We are to avoid, and treat in a clear and decisive manner those rooted in spiritual pride. The great reformer describes those with spiritual pride as, “the most venomous and pernicious men on earth, their hearts abysses of satanic pride.”<sup>8</sup> As leaders, we are often blessed with achieving our goals and creating a harmony at all levels. But this is not of our own doing. As Mary sings, and Luther writes, we need always be on guard against assuming this comes from our hand and not given us by our gracious and loving savior.

**3. PUTTING DOWN THE MIGHTY.** Although Luther indicts the wicked who are powerful, arrogantly opposing the Word of God, and the mighty who rely on their own strength, he also warns the educated in their cunning. He describes the difficulty of those entering the kingdom of heaven similarly to the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:24. In the brilliance of Luther he tells us to be people of character who are tied intimately to the Word of God and the promises of Christ. Luther uses “For truth and right”<sup>9</sup> to describe where we reside.

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“Leadership is all about trust. It challenges us as leaders to place our trust squarely in the promises of God and demonstrate that every day.”

**4. EXALTING THE LOWLY.** The lowly are: “...those who are willing to be in such a state, especially if they have been forced into it for the sake of God’s Word or the right.”<sup>10</sup> Luther believes the lowly are those who desire and work at intentionally being humble. He is not saying that the lowly are to rule in place of earthly rulers. Instead, Luther says the lowly are to be the educators and *spiritually* the judge both here and in eternity over them. Dare we as leaders seek to be “lowly”? Mary sings of her estate as lowly. This is in unity with Scripture. A lowly leader again is a person humbled and broken by the Law, a person tied to the Word of God and willing to speak God’s truth to power. We are reminded in our flawed humanity that moving away from humility before God places us far closer to Satan’s camp than anyone dare.

Luther combines the last two “Works”: **5. FILL THE HUNGRY** and **6. SEND THE RICH AWAY EMPTY.** Filling the hungry with good things is understood by Luther as an issue of *absolute trust* in God for all good things. In a glaring indictment of humanity he writes: “We lay up provisions against future hunger and need, so that we no longer have need of God and His works.”<sup>11</sup> Leadership is all about trust. It challenges us as leaders to

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7 Luther’s Works, Idem, page 333.

8 Luther’s Works, Idem, page 343.

9 Luther’s Works, Idem, page 344.

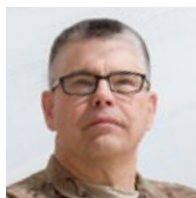
10 Luther’s Works, Idem, page 344.

11 Luther’s Works, Idem, page 347.

place our trust squarely in the promises of God and demonstrate that every day. The ‘sending of the rich away empty’ is a call to turn aside earthly riches that stand in the way of our relationship to God. The basic message of both works is the danger of idolatry, placing the created ahead of the Creator. At its core is obedience to the First Commandment in all aspects of our lives, including our vocation as leaders. The fifth and sixth works assist our leadership skills, making sure our priorities align with God. We are called to sanctified living through baptism made holy by the justification of Christ’s death on the cross.

When we approach leadership, whether at its various levels or in our situational awareness, we see Luther pointing us in a good direction. He points us to the Bible, to Mary’s song where in we find God’s promise and fulfillment. Integration of faith into leadership, especially as a redeemed child of God in Christ, is not easy. Luther, by pointing to Scripture, makes this very clear. It is nonetheless our calling to do so.

Combining one’s understanding of Areas of Operation with Situational Awareness, and adding the six Works of God, establishes a leader with an intuitive understanding, organizational awareness and the heart of a servant. With this in place, additional resources on leadership are “icing” on an already wonderful cake.



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## Book Review: *Race for Relevance: 5 Radical Changes for Associations* by Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers, CAE. ASAE, 2011

Sondra Weinzierl

I **RECENTLY ATTENDED** an association board meeting where discussion focused on attracting new members and the struggle to find volunteers. Sound familiar? In the book, *Race for Relevance: 5 Radical Changes for Associations*, authors Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers address these concerns. The authors have forty years of combined experience working with over a thousand organizations and have written an easy to read book with case studies and examples. Even though their focus is struggling associations, I found their recommendations pertinent to non-profit organizations including faith communities.

The authors make a compelling point: even though our world has radically changed in the last twenty years, many non-profit organizations have not and participation and membership have dwindled. There is nothing surprising about the changes they identify: people are busier and have less time; there are many competing forces for their attention; technology is changing rapidly; and newer generations, (e.g. Millennials) are not as eager to “join” groups of any kind.

The authors challenge readers to face the reality that the organizations they care about so deeply may no longer seem relevant to persons who must prioritize their time, energy and resources. Slow, incremental changes by these organizations will not be enough. They recommend “radical change” as the only antidote.

As we prepare for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, it is important for churches to boldly ask, “What changes must we make so that we can help current and future generations see the relevance of Jesus Christ in their lives?” It’s not that Jesus and the gospel messages are irrelevant; that will never be the case. But organizations that resist change or move too slowly could very well be in danger.

*Race for Relevance* proposes five recommendations:

1. **Overhaul the governance and committee model.** Reduce large boards to a competency-based model of only five to six members. Choose and train leaders to facilitate committee meetings that are focused on organizational objectives. These steps can streamline decision making, change and communication and reduce the frustration of busy volunteers who detest long, minimally productive meetings.
2. **Empower the CEO and enhance staff expertise.** Many board members and volunteers don’t have the time or expertise to oversee the details of the day to day operation of an organization. Instead, the governing body of the

organization should set the vision and broad objectives and hold the executive (senior leadership) and staff accountable for running the organization in a way that accomplishes the vision and objectives.

3. **Rigorously define your member market.** Every organization has limited resources. When we spread ourselves too thin as faith communities, trying to meet the multiple needs of too many, we may fail to serve any member well. Note the word, “rigorously” in this recommendation. Defining your member market should not be done haphazardly, but with deliberate introspection and analysis. The book lists eleven questions to guide organizations in this process. While some of the questions are more appropriate for associations than faith communities, they will challenge you to examine your congregation or organization in ways that will focus your efforts.
4. **Carefully rationalize programs and services.** The authors cite research showing that the average organization commits 80% of available staff and volunteer resources to programs and services that serve only 20% of members. What are the needs of your member segments? How many of these needs can you meet without diluting the quality of your programs and services?
5. **Build a robust technology framework.** Many non-profits, according to the authors, are years behind in adapting to technology. A common excuse is that not all members use technology ... but this is a strategy driven by the “lowest common denominator.” Organizations run the risk of losing the “race for relevance” if they are behind the curve and out of date.

I found many worthwhile aspects of the book helpful in my work with associations and other nonprofits. Coervers and Byers use a business model in their book and don't specifically address faith communities. Nevertheless, there are many relevant points that will challenge you to think and talk about changes that could improve the way your non-profit organization or faith community strives to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world.



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*recent strategic planning process.*

# The Privilege of Leadership

Joel Hempel

**SITTING WITH A GROUP** of colleagues and presenting myself for peer review, I asked for help in answering a question: “Should I retire from serving as Interim Director for Specialized Pastoral Ministry (SPM)?” Together, we explored a number of issues. The colleagues were confused, since most of what I was reporting was positive:

- “I’m serving in a position to which I received a divine call 28 years ago but chose to return the call in order to support my wife – and now I get to do what I had wanted to do then!
- “I have renewed energy and passion and am privileged to be in a position to (a) pastor ministers in SPM, (b) influence the direction of SPM for Synod, and (c) be a part of other areas of ministerial importance.
- “So far, our Lord, my boss (Bart Day who I highly respect as a leader) and my body are all supporting me for this ministry.
- “The knowledge and wisdom I’ve been blessed to gain over the years is respected and valued – at least for the most part. But,” I added, “there is also the ageism I experience.” The group asked what I meant. “It’s hard to put my finger on it, but I experience it as younger people looking past me! What’s worse is I let it get to me.”

“What else?” the group asked.

“Well, I have these fears:

- I don’t want to work beyond my ability to be effective. How do I know when I am too old for this work?
- If I keep working I may not get to some other interests ... like the book I want to finish writing.”

“Okay ... but there seems to be something else,” a brother reflected. “Hmm!” I mused. “I need time to think about that!”

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“It’s difficult to lead from a position of apology.”

Since the peer review happened at a conference and there were several peer review sessions scheduled, I returned and asked for another 15 minutes. “The ‘something else’ came to me ... the painful truth: My *own* ageism is my worst enemy!”

St Paul writes to his young disciple, “Let no one despise you for your youth...” (1 Timothy 4:12 ESV). It was sound advice. Today, I (and other aging Boomers and pre Boomers) need to hear that from an inverted perspective: Let no one despise you in your old age! And for sure, don’t you yourself despise what you have become in your advanced years.

It’s difficult to lead from a position of apology! It’s one thing to recognize your weaknesses, your limitations and your need for God’s grace and guidance. It is all together different to attempt to minister (and live) from a position of inadequacy or

unacceptability. So, since that peer review, my prayer has become one of thanksgiving for the good and bad of aging (you know, fake it until you make it). Especially though, I am thanking God for what I have — the opportunities and privileges, for the Lord’s hand evident in my history, and the multiple of undeserved, “beyond my understanding” blessings I continue to enjoy at work and in life.

### Gratitude for John Fale

One of my blessings has been John Fale! I remain grateful for John acknowledging his need for help and for trusting me in this position. At the time I retired from full time ministry in 2009 as a CPE supervisor and administrator with Lutheran Senior Services in St Louis, John’s position was changing — again — and it was increasingly hard for him to keep up with the demand within SPM, especially after Judy Ladage’s retirement. So he contracted with me to provide 15 hours a week in the area of ecclesiastical endorsement. I agreed and asked for a desk at the International Center (IC) where I could stay focused on my work. He agreed. Then, over time, the need increased — as did my hours. Soon I was working a half-time job, then full time. As it stands today, John is virtually out of SPM altogether. But since he is only a floor away, I can still get to him for advice and counsel.

Asking for help with the recognition of not having all the gifts needed for a job has been one of the strengths I bring to leadership. It is a strength that has grown out of brokenness and feelings of inadequacy ever since childhood. But from wounds eventually healed come blessings to be embraced. St Paul counsels the saints at Philippi: “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than ourselves (2:3 ESV).”

“Counting others more significant” has been the easy part! Asking for help came only with effort and the desire to become more effective in ministry. This lesson is reinforced as I watch political pundits (I’m somewhat of a political talk show junkie) on FOX, MSNBC, and CNN do their jobs. It has become apparent to me that some moderators enjoy bringing out the best in their guests, while others enjoy showing off and cutting off their guests, meanwhile offering their own “surpassingly insightful” comments on the topic. How obnoxious! Some hosts like shining the light on their guests; others prefer to have the light focused only on themselves.

So the takeaway for me has been to move the light off of me, when possible, and let others enjoy the attention. I’d much rather have someone else photographed and pictured in Synod’s periodicals than myself. When possible, I enjoy identifying those with exceptional gifts and abilities and inviting them to shine for the sake of SPM. If someone will, I’d just as soon have them lead. I’ve had my opportunities to lead and have enjoyed it. I can now equally enjoy serving as support and encourager behind the scenes.

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“Asking for help with the recognition of not having all the gifts needed for a job has been one of the strengths I bring to leadership.”

Jesus' words of admonishment are important to me: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave... (Matt. 20:25-28 ESV)" I read and hear this message not as a standard to achieve, not as a way to become successful. Rather, I believe servanthood is the rule and norm for a Christian leader. If greatness comes it will not be the result of one's deliberate effort to achieve it. Rather any greatness that results from serving the interests of others is an unintentional byproduct of ministry — a blessing that is unrecognizable. As soon as someone says, "Look at how great I am" they don't have it!

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"Servanthood is the rule and norm for a Christian leader."

### Administration as Ministry

I suppose some who have never had the privilege of serving in an administrative position may not see it as ministry. It does not seem to be an example of hands-on care of others. But those of us who have been privileged to do it find there are multiple ways to minister.

For me, at the LCMS International Center, there are the opportunities with people — fellow staff — who stop by to "chat." The chatting then turns to a personal need and my pastoral care self turns on. As an introvert, I don't socialize easily. But serious conversations — or more accurately serious conversations about the other person — are my sweet spot. My pastoral care antennas are always up around the office or at a social function. I enjoy joking around and laughing it up, but any hint of something deeper, and I check it out if the time and place is appropriate.

But leadership is ministry in other ways as well. I get to mentor colleagues through the endorsement process and offer counsel over the phone, via email and less frequently in person. I also get to work with committees and task forces to create educational events and conferences to support our constituents. An important project currently on the front burner is recruitment for SPM. The SPM Recruitment Task Force is working on creative approaches like a self-assessment instrument based on nine identified unique characteristics of those in SPM, a Smartphone App to lead inquiring minds into the world of SPM, developing two-minute videos that address the blessings of SPM and the process for endorsement, a glossary of terms, and recommended additions to the Personal Information Form (PIF) so additional SPM data can be available to the district presidents for issuing calls and identifying subject matter experts.

I also get to work on documents like the endorsement manual, code of ethics, and the Board for National Mission (BNM) call process — all of which serve the ministers within SPM and those they serve. I get to advocate for our specialized pastoral ministers in small but I think important ways periodically in Synodical news outlets,

with District Presidents (DPs), occasionally with the BNM, and with my immediate supervisor – Bart Day, Executive Director for the Office of National Mission (ONM).

### SPM as Special Forces

Something else is important to me regarding leadership at the Synodical level within our church body. Those in SPM are notoriously accomplished at flying under the radar. They (we) are also notorious for complaining when we don't get the same recognition and appreciation that our parish colleagues receive. We want to be recognized as ministers of equal value with those in parish ministry, but many of us also want to keep our distance from circuit gatherings and district conferences – ostensibly because the topics don't apply to us and/or "the parish guys don't get what we do!" The fact is: we like being on the edge and not being too visible.

Reality check: We can't have it both ways! We can't keep our distance and expect to be affirmed. So I also function as an encourager and admonisher with my SPM colleagues to make their presence known in their circuits and districts as well as with their district presidents. But there are also real issues those in SPM have to manage emotionally and in practice: Specialized pastoral ministers often have little time and schedule flexibility, as well as little support for ecclesiastical matters, from their on-the-job supervisors. Then there is this painful fact: Many district presidents don't "know" who we are in their district or what we do, and when the district president reaches out to *pastors*, for some reason (e.g. to get our Personal Information Form updated, or to express appreciation), those in SPM are regularly overlooked. That hurts!

So my ministry includes making my best effort to affirm our brothers and sisters in SPM for the incredible jobs they are doing under difficult circumstances and certainly with far less appreciation than is afforded our parish colleagues. I also do what I can to bring SPM out from the shadows, so it can be seen by parish pastoral colleagues, district presidents, and the members in the pews as the special forces <sup>1</sup> we are: called to serve on the edges of culture.

### Tension: Creative and Not So Creative

There is also within SPM a tension that can fatigue our people. The SPM Educational Events we will be hosting in 2017 are going to be on the theme of "Crossing the Lines – Approaching the Edge." Those of us in SPM have been sent by the church to minister in pluralistic contexts that challenge our LCMS theology and practice. Many of our SPM colleagues struggle *daily* with how far they can bend but not break the "rules." Generally, they do well, and those who are endorsed have agreed to support and live by the SPM Code of Ethics along with their ordination or commission vows.

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"So I also function as an encourager and admonisher with my SPM colleagues to make their presence known in their circuits and districts as well as with their district presidents."

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Concordia Theological Seminary Deaconess Amy Rast for this metaphor.

But the pressure is increasing, and coming especially from CEOs and Executive Chaplains who expect their chaplains to do whatever is needed to serve their institution's constituents. This gets complicated! Of course, some DPs are more understanding and forbearing than others in their ecclesiastical supervision.

So here it is: If we "toe the line" with our LCMS pastoral practice, not only will our positions in institutional ministry be at risk with shortsighted CEOs, but also the demands of our changing culture and its influence on institutions will increasingly squeeze us out of SPM altogether. And on the flip side, if we don't "toe the LCMS line," our roster status is at risk. It's a painful tension!

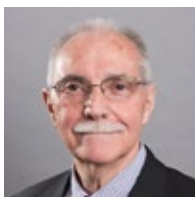
Then there is this tension: Most of us in SPM have great professional and friendly relationships with ministers and professional colleagues of all faith groups and theological perspectives. Over the course of time however, this reality can influence and reshape one's LCMS theology (and practice). That is part of the danger (in my judgment) of serving in SPM! The tendency to be reshaped can (not necessarily) happen as those in SPM grow close to ministers of other faiths and denominational perspectives, hear their professional peers espouse their own theology with equal vigor and pride, and then are challenged on our beliefs and practices. Such challenges are actually a good thing for those who sincerely want to engage in dialogue. But for those who only intend to disparage and disrespect, the tension of working in a hostile environment can become disheartening, forcing some colleagues to retreat into themselves or seek a call elsewhere, or even leave the ministry!

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"My calling and privilege is to support our specialized pastoral ministers."

So our specialized pastoral ministers need to be able to walk this tightrope between two poles: the pole of vocational and theological integrity (remaining in the Word and in sync with our Confessions), and the pole of collegiality, which necessarily includes open and respectful theological dialogue. But when SPMs are disrespected or their conscience is disregarded, they also need their leadership in SPM to stand with them and, when appropriate, speak in their defense.

Thus my calling and privilege is to (a) support our specialized pastoral ministers as they remain faithful to their baptismal and ministerial covenants, (b) advocate for understanding and express gratitude to district presidents for their pastoral supervision and (c) seek ways for those of us in SPM to make ourselves and our ministry so valuable to institutions that CEOs can't afford to eliminate us merely because of the few times our integrity becomes problematic for their institutions.



*Joel Hempel is a 1971 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary and a Supervisor Emeritus with the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. He developed an innovative Inner City CPE Program in Cincinnati before moving to Laclede Groves Retirement Community in St. Louis County, a ministry of Lutheran Senior Services. There he developed a second CPE Center. He currently serves in the position about which he has written in this article.*

# Reflections on the Ministry of Administration

Judy Simonson

**THE FIRST TIME** I was able to name what I was doing as simply ministry was at a First Call Theological Education conference where Bishop Guy Edmiston presented a workshop called “The Ministry of Administration.” He gave credence to my own belief that what I was doing as a bishop’s assistant was truly ministry. Yes, I supplied pulpits from time to time, but that was not my official call. Yet, I knew in my heart that I was still doing ministry.

Of course, I have almost always lived “on the edge” of ministry in the eyes of many in the church. I served as a parish pastor for only two years after ordination and then, due to the death of the senior pastor, went on leave from call and returned to my former career as a high school math teacher. Two years later I was free for the summer, as teachers usually are, and I accepted a position as an interim chaplain in a long-term care facility. I was called there and stayed for almost twelve years. Then I went to be an assistant to a bishop who had, coincidentally, done many, many funerals with me at the home!

When that call ended in our joint retirement after another twelve years, I spent a few months supplying pulpits in my new synod. Then the call came from Chicago and I got on a plane and interviewed for my present position. While I am not “called” in a technical sense, I understand what I am doing now in assisting others to answer their calls to be just as valid.

In the ELCA, the position of Mission Coordinator for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling and Clinical Education (known in ecumenical circles as the “endorsing agent”) has been through many transitions since the ELCA was formed. Now it is back “in house” as a half-time position. It involves assisting those who want to be endorsed and subsequently certified by the Association of Professional Chaplains and who need endorsement to proceed to become clinical pastoral education supervisors. Many of our rostered people are now finding that their institutions are asking them to have such credentials also. There is a lot of paperwork involved as well as the task of making arrangements for consultation committees to meet. Then, after everyone goes home, there are the reports to write and multiple letters to send!

As I have come to understand it, the overarching theme of all ministry is helping people hear God’s call for their lives and equipping them to follow it. The setting — parish, institution, or judicatory office — doesn’t really define the work. The task is the same though the cast of characters and their circumstances may be different.

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“The overarching theme of all ministry is helping people hear God’s call for their lives and equipping them to follow it.”



The challenges of this work are also the same as in any other form of ministry. It would be nice to have more resources to be able to spend less time sorting papers and making copies — ask almost any parish pastor! Staying in close touch with members of the flock is always a top priority and it can sometimes be overwhelming.

In terms of a Lutheran perspective, I feel blessed to be able to operate from the standpoint of the primacy of grace. As I interact with those of other faith traditions, I can acknowledge our differences without feeling threatened or diminished. My call is not to judge, but to embody the love of God for all humanity. That, of course, is what all of us called to specialized ministry in the world are charged with doing.



*Judy Simonson lives in rural Pennsylvania on the Maryland border, in a 1915 farmhouse on 30 acres. In addition to her ministry, she is the mother of four and grandmother of eleven. She has two “granddogs” — the kind you get from your children when they move to places where they can’t keep them. Then there are the cats that people drop off when they see her barn and think she must need barn cats.*