

LEADERSHIP'S GREATEST CHALLENGE III

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Len Sweet, church historian, theologian, and explorer of this new world culture gives us EIGHT CATCH 22's FOR THE 21C. He outlines some assumptions that are leading religious leadership astray as we seek to move into this new world.

ASSUMPTION #1 YESTERDAY isn't all that different from TODAY _____. While God doesn't change, it's a whole new world out there. Times have changed!

People indeed have changed. If you're over 38 you're an IMMIGRANT _____. If you're under 38, you're a NATIVE _____. I am an immigrant to a whole new world that is different from the world I was born in, I was educated in, I was trained to do ministry in. I'm having to learn a new language, new customs, and cross over into a whole new world. By and large, the church has said to the people who are living off the map in this native culture, "We want to reach you for Jesus but first you've got to become like us."

ASSUMPTION # 2 *Leaders need to be in charge and* CONTROL _____. Peter Senge said it directly, "Give up being in control." It's hard for us immigrants, who have been taught that being in control and in charge is what it means to be a leader. Ken Blanchard reminds us that "You cannot survive anymore without SHARED _____ power". Jesus had three years in which to save the world. What did he do? He built a TEAM _____. He shared power.

ASSUMPTION # 3 *Give me* PROGRAMS _____ *to roll out and I'll be fine.* The early American explorers Lewis and Clark could never know for sure what lay around the next bend of the river, what lay over the next hill. As Margaret Wheatley puts it, "we start not with a plan but with a passion." Planning has been replaced by preparedness.

ASSUMPTION # 4 *Old* MODELS _____ *of ministry will continue to work.* The old world, also known as the modern world turned human beings into things and things into human desires. The modern world believed the fundamental heresy that it is the trees that move the wind! The world we function in is a post-modern world. We, in this post-modern culture must believe that the most powerful forces

in the universe are the invisible forces, the unseen forces, the spiritual forces. Margaret Wheatley speaking of the re-founding movement says, "The institutions that we have do not work. They will never work again. They are the wrong forms for this age. Institutions are prisons for the spirit. Don't waste your time trying to fix them." Instead do what? Re-FOUND them!

ASSUMPTION # 5 CULTURE is the enemy. Dealing with this new world is not easy. For some who look at this new world that's forming with its chaos, confusion and complexity, the only way to handle it is just stay out. Giant corporations are replacing the nation states. What the nation state was to the modern world, the corporate entity is to this postmodern world. It means that the primary power paradigm for natives is not politics, it is economics.

Faith is like a kite: a contrary wind causes it to rise.

ASSUMPTION # 6 *Credentials authenticate you as a PROFESSIONAL.* Credentials begin with the spiritual authenticity of your walk with Christ - it is the anointing of the Spirit. Then it invites others to participate - the age of representation has given birth to the age of participation. The key trait of leadership today, as Margaret Wheatley said, is having more confidence in other people than you have in yourself. Shine the light on others. Ask them to participate. The question is not "What are our LEADERS doing for ME?" but, "How are our LEADERS helping me to LEAD?"

ASSUMPTION # 7 *The more COMPLEX the culture, the more complex we need to get.* The truth is just the opposite. The more complex the world, the more simple some things need to be. Complexity drives us to simplicity - the relationship between change and continuity. What should never change? What should be changed? "How do we keep our core intact while adapting to the change?" If our core is compromised, we become corrupt. In a world where the edges are getting SOFTER, our core needs to be HARDER than ever. And what is our center? It is Jesus, the Christ. In Jesus the word became flesh, the conceptual became perceptual, the abstract became concrete, statement became story, principle became person.

ASSUMPTION # 8 *Postmoderns are looking for a Christian WORLD VIEW.* On the contrary, postmoderns are looking for a Christian world life. A Sunday-go-to-meeting is a faith-based religion. A Sunday-go-to-

Monday is a practice-based religion. The "word" becoming "flesh". Peter Senge says the very best dot-com companies have a mission - not to get wealthy, but to CHANCE THE WORLD. So, is our fundamental mission to be large or to change the world?

"If you think the people you attract could be better, then its time for you to improve yourself." John Maxwell

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one ability or quality what would it be?
2. What do you need to change about your thinking?
3. What new competency do you need to learn?
4. What about you would keep you from going to the next level?

The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious – John Sculley

The greatest challenge facing leaders is **growth leadership = HOW WE THINK**

We must change the way we THINK to go to the next level.

A leader's role is to constantly challenge the status quo and continuously keep asking, "Why do we do this? Why do we do it this way?"

We must change how we process our THINKING leading to ACTIONS.

**"Think differently. See differently"
To act differently, you must think differently.**