The Core Capacities of an Adaptive Leader
Tod Bolsinger, Ph.D.
“The primary way to prepare for the unknown is to attend to the quality of our relationships, to how well we know and trust one another...

There is one core principle for developing these relationships. People must be engaged in meaningful work together if they are to transcend individual concerns and develop new capacities.”

Margaret Wheatley
What is the work that we are to do?
Trinitarian Leadership

- To gather people, to be a community for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ
Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.
Leadership as Transformation

“To help a people to grow so they can face their biggest challenges.”

Heifetz
Transformation

- For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. (Rom 8:29)

- So, what is the “family business” of God’s family?
The Church and its Vocation

- Marks of “Reconciliation” (Karl Barth)
  Justification.
  Sanctification.
  Vocation.

  God's calling of a particular people is for God's saving purposes for the world…”
  Darrell Guder

- Vocation is of “fundamental ecclesiological importance in the theology of reconciliation.”
“How does the church truly regain its understanding of itself as called and sent, remembering that the term mission means, in fact, ‘sending’?”

Darrell Guder
“If western societies have become post–Christian mission fields, how can traditional churches become then missionary churches?”

Lesslie Newbigin
Back to the Pass

- What prepared The Corps of Discovery for this moment?
- Why *didn’t* they turn back?
- What kept them from a ‘failure of nerve’?
“At the moment of crisis, you will not rise to the occasion, you will default to your training.”

How had they trained for this moment?

(How can we train for ours?)
Rule #1 Leadership is about transformation... transformation that starts with the **leaders**

Rule #2 No one goes into uncharted territory alone.

Rule #3 Transformation is fueled by trust.
Transformational Leadership begins in Technical Competence "Lewis and Clark" 

Leadership becomes transformational with Adaptive Capacity "A Corps of Discovery"

Leadership is validated in Relational Congruence Trust is extended. A "Corps" is formed.
Heifetz on Leadership

- To energize a community of people toward their own transformation in order to meet their greatest challenges.

- Rule #1 Leadership is about transformation... transformation that starts with the leaders
The Assessment
Begins in Technical Competence

- **Lewis:**

- **Clark:**
Transformational Leadership

Competence builds credibility.

Adaptive Capacity

Technical Competence

Relational Congruence
What technical competence is necessary to be a church leader?
“Threshold” Competencies for Transformational Leadership

- Stewardship of Scriptures and Tradition
- Stewardship of Souls and Communities
- Stewardship of Teams and Tasks
Rule #1  Leadership is about transformation… transformation that starts with the leaders.

Rule #2  No one goes into uncharted territory alone. Before there can be a “discovery” there must be a “corps.”
Transformational Leadership

Adaptive Capacity

Technical Competence

Relational Congruence

Congruence leads to transparency which builds trust.
Lewis and Clark and the fork in the river...

- A long upstream journey.
- A long winter.
- A trustworthy partnership.
Safe Holding Environments

“Leadership comes down to creating conditions of trust within an organization.”

Colin Powell
Transformational Leadership

Adaptive Capacity

Technical Competence

Relational Congruence

Congruence leads to transparency which builds trust.
The True Leader is the one who is not blaming anyone else.

(…and can stay calm enough to look beyond quick fixes, distractions and work avoidance.)
Twelve Years for the Sacrament
Red Zone / Blue Zone

Survival
Acceptance
Control
Competence

Principles
Values
Mission
You are not your role.
You must *bring* your self to your role.
But...you are not your role.
"Stay Calm, Stay Connected, Stay the Course"

Keep the focus of effort on serving the MISSION, expressing your CONVICTIONS, and staying in RELATIONSHIP.
Rules for Uncharted Territory

- **Rule #1** Leadership is about transformation... transformation that starts with the leaders
- **Rule #2** No one goes into uncharted territory alone.
- **Rule #3** Transformation is fueled by trust.
Transformational Leadership begins in “Technical Competence”

Adaptive Capacity

Leadership becomes transformational with “Adaptive Capacity”

Technical Competence

Leadership is validated in “Personal Congruence”. Trust is extended and a “Corps” is born

Personal Congruence
Get up on the balcony (while listening from the floor)

Give the work back to the people. Transition from being the “great answer giver” to a “great question asker”

Growth focused. Leading people to grow so THEY can face their biggest challenge.

Go with the energy. Work with the mature and motivated.

Grief work: Leading means dealing with loss. “Growing up means giving up.”
“If western societies have become post-Christian mission fields, how can traditional churches become then missionary churches?”

Lesslie Newbigin
How can traditional churches become missionary churches?

Through transformed leaders!

Being Trustworthy.
Building Teams.
Leading into Uncharted Territory.
The Gift of Uncharted Territory

- Openness to an unexpected voice.
- A truly revolutionary vote.
- The discovery of a ‘deserter’.
Uncharted Territory is where God takes you to transform you.
Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Mark 3:31–35