REGENCY LEADERSHIP THEORY
LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Drawn from: Matthew 28:18-20

(Including citations and references)

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Leadership Development for the Next Generation

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Regency leadership theory presents a model for building future leaders for the modern world based on Christ's message to His disciples in Matthew 28. God's design for the leadership of His church rests on Christ keeping full authority over His church and His continuous leadership presence with His followers. Under regency-leadership theory, those in church leadership roles lead solely as Christ's regents - acting as an agent or representative for the absent King. Regency leadership theory further argues the future of the church rests in existing leadership's effectiveness in developing future generations of regency-leaders capable and committed as Christ's agent to guide Christ's church into the emerging world.

Regency leadership theory stresses the critical need to develop future regency-leaders with characteristics to meet the coming challenges of our unpredictable world. Those characteristics include the need for ethics, personal renewal, biblical core values, a heart toughened for battle against our dominant secular society, and an understanding of organizational systems and design. Additional characteristics include adaptability, a comfort with differing ideologies and cultures, and a capacity to deal with uncertainty. The final characteristics include a commitment to return to the first-century dedication to live and die for Christ - empty of self-interest - accepting His full authority and submitting to Him as His servant representative. Regency leadership theory will challenge the reader to embrace the uncertainty of the future and promote "near successes" in the effort to move our churches through apprehensive times.

Regency Leadership Theory and Matthew 28:18-20

Regency-leadership theory draws its origin from the first-century church concept of the full lordship of Jesus Christ in all areas and brings that lordship to a logical and intrusive conclusion in the lives of present-day church leaders. In Christ's final commission in Matthew 28, He said He is the holder of all authority and He is ever-present with us until the end of time. It must follow if Christ still has all authority, then Christian leaders do not. Yet scripture suggests Christian leaders do have authority. We must then infer the authority of Christians in leadership roles must be a delegated authority. When a king or monarch temporarily delegates authority to a follower, the word used to describe the delegated relationship is "regency."

The foundation of regency-leadership theory rests on the truth that Christ holds all authority (Mt 28:18), placing those in Christian leadership roles as His regents acting fully on His behalf. For example, during the Middle Ages when a monarch left the country he or she would commission a regent position and a person to serve in the position to lead in the monarch's name and with delegated authority. The monarch expected the regent always to decide in the best interest of the monarch. An honest regent would never act on the thought of using the regency position for personal interest. Similarly, whenever a Christian regency-leader puts personal interest ahead of Christ's interest in any leadership decision that leader steps outside the delegated regency role as Christ's representative.

A Christian regency-leader will battle continuously between a desire for personal gain of many kinds and the desire to be true to the selfless role as Christ's regent. This internal battle between Christ's authority and the regency-leader's self-interest is the core tension Paul addresses when he writes about the Christian struggle between the Spirit and the flesh (Gal 5:16-26). Paul clearly argues the desires of our flesh and the desires for the Spirit battle in our hearts continuously (Gal 5:17). A key to retaining the proper mind-set as a regent of Christ pivots on a leader choosing to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16) and listen to the voice of the Master.

Many seminal authors have argued leadership theories far different from what this paper proposes. However, Daniel Wren argues that the academic world's theories of leadership lack the real substance of outside source support.[1] In contrast, scripture unfolds leadership from its biblical perspective which is a reliable outside source. Regency-leadership theory provides a biblical model of Christian leadership and the goal of leadership development.

Foundation of Regency

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus established Himself as an ever-present leader with permanent authority. First, as an ever-present leader, Jesus said He would be with His disciples always. Second, Jesus passed on His regency relations with His Father to His disciples keeping Himself as the patron with permanent authority. It is critical to notice that today Christians do not have an absentee leader. It is also critical to notice that Jesus kept His authority in His relations with His followers. Twenty-four hours a day, Jesus is with us as the one with the highest authority.

Since Christ holds all authority, a Christian regency-leader should not steal God's authority.[2] This does not suggest the regency-leader lacks authority. The one in a Christian regency-leadership role holds delegated authority, but for God's purposes and according to God's will. In the same way a monarch gives authority to the regency role, not the person in the role, a Christian regency-leader's authority attaches to the role, not the person.

For example, if a person accepts an Elder role in a congregation, certain responsibilities and authority go with the role under Christ. If in the future the individual leaves the Elder role, the Elder gives up the responsibility and authority. Christ is the only one with permanent authority based on who He is.

The key to the regency relations with Christ surfaces in the simple triangle (Fig. 1). Christ is the head of His church with the regent-leader and the follower equal in Christ by position, but in different roles. The regent-leader holds a delegated authority under Christ; however, Christ always remains in highest authority.

Development of Character Traits

Developing disciples to be regency-leaders begins and centers on their "emptying of self" experience. This is the experience referred to as "the power of God in God's people"[3] when Christ reigns (at the top of the triangle) as the One with full authority and the regency-leader serves Christ as one personally abandoned to Him. Developing disciples to be regency-leaders follows a strategy of building receptivity to selfless service and subsequently Christ's divine empowerment.[4]
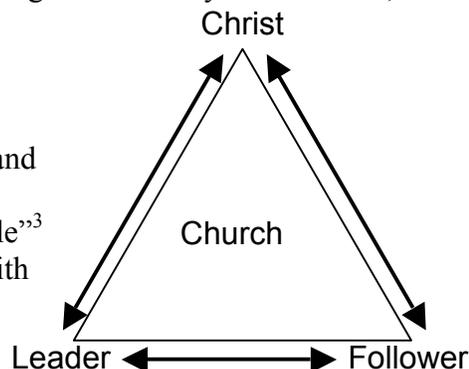
Fig. 1 - Source: Dr. Allen Quist

This does not decrease the importance of addressing areas of skill and knowledge, but recognizes the greater importance of regency-leadership becoming a selfless servant with authority and empowerment, which must be the hub of the wheel of development. How this happens within a congregation or other Christian organizations will differ depending on the spiritual maturity of each developing leader, the needs of the organization, and the available people and funds.

In Ephesians 1:15-23, Paul shows himself as an example of a regency-leader when he argues Christ is the head (the top of the triangle) over His church. Later in 4:15-16, Paul connects Christ's headship over all the various parts of the church, pointing out how each part of the church has a particular "role" within the body. This suggests that within the governance structure of a congregation Christ remains head over all. Any leadership hierarchy within a regency-leader organizational structure remains as a group and individually living sacrifices for Christ.

Several years ago, I met a regency-leader of a church in the greater Portland, Oregon area. This pastor (who we will refer to as Pastor Jack) was popular within the church. The church was growing steadily and developing its future leaders out of its own membership. Pastor Jack recognized the danger of his popularity as a potential future problem for the church. He knew that because of his popularity if for any reason he could not continue his preaching and leading role the church would suffer a serious setback. Pastor Jack set out to dilute his preaching and governance roles by sharing the preaching and passing his governance responsibilities to other staff pastors and directors. Today, if Pastor Jack's health forced him to step down, the church would continue unabated. Being empty of self for Christ, Pastor Jack ignored his personal interest (power, recognition, financial security) to build a stronger organization for Christ. This is regency-leadership.

Role of Ethics

Ethics plays a significant role in developing a regency-leader by supplying a compass into the future. Ethics is not more rules or an expansion of law. Rather ethics asks integrity related questions focusing on honor, trust, and shame[5]. Ethics raises questions about what leaders do in secret that they are not willing to share openly or what they hope no one ever finds out. Howard Gardner argued an ethical person asks, "If all the workers in my profession…did what I do, what would the world be like?"[6] A regency-leader would ask, "If the entire world knew my private thoughts and fantasies would it honor or shame the Gospel of Christ?"

Developing regency-leaders with heart for ethics requires developing leaders who out of their selflessness recognize their responsibility to protect the honor of the family of God. Just like the battle between the Spirit and the flesh, regency-leaders will fight the battle between Christ's intended intimate relations within the family of God and the independent spirit found in our dominant western society.

Link to Christ

As a word of caution, Paul teaches that the flesh is strong and will always be pulling God's people back toward self-interest. Regency-leaders are no exception. With that in mind, continually refreshing intimacy with Christ (living in the Spirit) becomes an important piece of developing regency-leaders. During times of re-linking or renewal, an existing or developing regency-leader can reexamine if Christ is still at the top of their triangle or if the leader has begun to assume some of Christ's authority over the leader's life.

For a growing regency-leader, renewal requires more than just a vacation or extra rest. It encompasses significant time with a trusted friend[7] who has permission to ask tough questions and significant time alone with God and His Word[8] to allow the Spirit to probe deeply into the heart. Augustine reminded us of this renewal that comes from focusing on God, "… our hearts are restless unless they rest in You."[9] This paper argues renewal is critical in developing and living the life of a regency-leader. The leader must selflessly strive to have God "a constant presence in our mind, crowding out every false idea … and every crooked inference or belief."[10] Renewal occurs as a Christian becomes empty for Christ, letting the Spirit control the mind (Romans 8:6) which then influences the will, body, social dimensions, and soul.[11]

Strategic Thinking

Just as Jesus took a strategic posture in developing His disciples, a regency-leader will need to be strategic in developing future regency-leaders. Although not exclusive, regency leadership theory addresses four internal areas important for our current generation.

God's Values-Based Strategic Intent

Leaders must be able to keep their lives aligned with biblical core values.[12] This alignment is critical since out of value alignment can spring a strategic intent[13] – a commitment to reach beyond what leaders see as within their means and capacities. Because of the strategic intent of regency-leaders, the congregation will commit themselves to whatever direction Christ leads them.[14]

Values-based strategic intent began within the hearts and minds of the new believers in the first-century church when they embraced God's values. In that Pentecost moment, God's Spirit intervened into the hearts, minds, and values of His people.[15] In that Pentecost moment, God birthed His church with God's value-based strategic intent.

Paul's first letter to Timothy provides a list of the core values God intends for His regency-leaders to hold:

- Regency-leaders value godliness which will be obvious in their "speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity" (1 Tm 4:12) – based on the eight times Paul mentions godliness.[16]

- Regency-leaders value God being in them – shown by "a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tm 1:5).

- Regency-leaders value fortitude – shown by the heartiness to "fight the good fight", to continue "keeping the faith", and to preserve "a good conscience" (1 Tm 1:18-19; 6:12).

- Regency-leaders value Spirit-led insightfulness – based on Scripture shown by a reliance on the Word (1 Tm 4:6).

Given the world's onslaught of competing values, regency-leaders selflessly anchored to God's values provide stability for the church to be a light to the dominant culture.

Dealing with Secularization

Secularization of the church has surfaced as a significant battle for regency-leaders. Our dominant culture's quest for material possession, comforts, and image has been increasingly pushing the church into "a hollowing out of evangelical conviction."[17] The difference in values between the general population and most professing Christians is almost indiscernible.[18]

Essentially, today's church is losing the battle.[19] This is not just because we face a secular world that we find the church adapting to the secular agenda; the church has always faced other agendas. More significant has been the church taking the focus off Christ as our leader.

To counter this trend, regency-leaders must refocus themselves and their congregations back on Christ's teaching and values. Regency-leaders must lead their congregations to an understanding of the serious damage of secularization to the ministries of the church and the message of the Gospel. Regency-leaders must lead their congregations back to emptying of self for Christ.

Dealing with Systems

All organizations, including the church, perform in varying degrees in a world of systems – external systems (such as power and telephone) and internal systems (such as internal communication, computer, and governance). At times these systems work in conflict with one another creating a leadership challenge.[20] But when all the systems perform in concert, they operate in full compatibility as if they were one.[21]

The greatest struggle occurs when internal systems conflict with the core values of the regency-leaders and the church.[22] For example, a facet of organizational governance could conflict with the value of "love." Existing regency-leaders must teach the next generation to recognize potential conflict. Since love is a nonnegotiable command, the leader must adjust the governance response to align with love. Within the system of regency-leaders' core values, they have a responsibility to love and respect one another every day.[23]

As an illustration, a simple accounting system must incorporate procedures to protect more than the organization. Love demands it must also protect the individuals doing the work.[24] A regency-leader's value for people will require the leader to have the necessary procedures to protect people from false accusation. The question always before the regency-leaders is, "How does what we are doing fit within God's core values?"

For regency-leaders, the manner in which they use the various systems within the church communicates volumes about how serious leaders are about the core values.[25] Just because a leader is able to send a message by email does not mean the leaders should use email; love and respect may call for a personal visit.

Organizational Design

Organizational design provides the platform for creating and improving an organization's parts and systems, plus adapting how they interact with one another.[26] To increase the effectiveness of any organization, there must be an efficient intercooperative network between the "strategy, structure, process, rewards, and people."[27] Therefore, there must be a working knowledge of organizational design that is adaptive in developing regency-leaders. [28]

We have an example of adaptive organizational design in our own bodies; God created us with the capacity to design. When our minds receive information about the world around us, they automatically adjust to prepare us for better adaptation. Our minds even have the ability to see future implications of our present experiences. [29] God made our brains to adapt to new information. [30]

Given the continuous and rapid changes in our world and communities, regency-leaders will need to be adaptive[31] and will need to develop future regency-leaders to be the same.[32] While the message should not change, the approach and delivery method must adapt to the receptive touch points of our churches' target people. The world and our society are becoming more cross-cultural and we will have to adjust.[33]

The Emerging Global World

The Emerging World

During most of world history, changes developed slowly and organizations enjoyed time to redesign to adapt to whatever change occurred. Daniel Wren wrote that through the long agricultural era, there was little pressure to change at all. [34] Through the early stages of the industrial era, organizations started recognizing the need to adapt and began making the necessary changes. [35] In the later years of the industrial era, changes in the world emerged more rapidly and yet organizations were still able to adapt.

Now in the early stages of the technological era, organizations find themselves trapped. Emerging events develop quickly while organizations wrestle with a slow turnaround time of adaptation. Before many organizations are able to adapt to an emerging condition, the organizations face still another and newer emerging condition.[36] Rex Miller argues that with each new emerging event will come still another change resulting in an acceleration of still more change.[37] To adapt, organizations, including churches, will have to rethink how they approach change.[38]

Regency-leaders and congregations today are beginning to struggle with adapting to many of the changes occurring in our society. Growing technology and media are an obvious development, one that many churches are eagerly leveraging for ministry purposes. Less obvious yet likely more significant are changes in the profile of our communities, including growing differences in ideologies and cultures.

Differing Ideologies

Increasing global instant communication and media pulls people from around the world into daily contact with other ideologies. We can watch an event on the other side of the globe as if it was happening just across our city. As a result, we now have daily contact with ideologies differing from our own.

Significantly, leaders within each of the differing ideologies want to lead others into what they believe[39] creating a challenge for Christian regency-leaders. Regency-leaders need to be able to identify when conflicting ideologies try to influence the church. Meanwhile, they will also need to be able to lead the church to evangelize people from other ideologies.

Paul's regency-driven life shows an ability to deal flexibly with conflicting ideologies. Paul remained steadfast in his commitment to Christ and the Gospel, but approached people of differing ideologies in a manner that would connect to them. When Paul went to a city with a Jewish population, he started in the synagogue with a discussion about the Messiah. When Paul went to Athens, he started with the city elders and a discussion about the unknown God. Similarly, today's regency-leaders will need to lead the church to engage differing ideologies at their touch points without changing the message of the Gospel.[40]

Impact of Culture

People who travel in other areas of the world have experienced many distinctions between cultures. To help us understand the unique characteristics of those cultures, Geert Hofstede provided a list of the major cultures with a description of the main characteristics of each.[41] Hofstede's information provides help for the regency-leader to clarify the potential for cultural misunderstanding.

However, because of a regency-leader's value for individual people, the regency leader also recognizes the uniqueness of each individual within each unique culture. As helpful as Hofstede's dimensions may be, they do not provide a leader with the information to deal with any one person who will be unique even within his or her own culture. Regency-leaders should avoid "coarse identity classifications" because people are too complex for generalization.[42] For maximum communication there is no shortcut; a leader must get to know others one person at a time.[43] In regency-leadership development, it is critical to teach developing regency-leaders to recognize and honor each individual's uniqueness.

Cosmopolitan Regency-Leader

To understand the nature of a regency-leader for the emerging world today, we need to unpack the idea of leader. Winston and Patterson define "leader" as "one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives."[44] A regency-leader is a leader as defined by Winston and Patterson, but who also fully and daily represents Christ the King as His regent.

Adding the term "cosmopolitan" to regency-leader expands the picture of a Christian regency-leader to one who is comfortable in an environment in which individuals have values and beliefs different from the leader.[45] The cosmopolitan keeps a balance between holding personal values and beliefs while accepting people with differing values and beliefs by remaining people centered.[46]

Gudykunst and Kim offer an illustration of a cosmopolitan point-of-view: "Respect for all cultures; understanding of what individuals in other cultures think, feel, and believe; and appreciation for differences among cultures."[47] Regency-leaders will need to learn to be cosmopolitan and to lead the members of their congregations to be cosmopolitan. The cosmopolitan mind-set will be necessary for the church to minister successfully to our growing cross-cultural communities.

Imagining the Future

The Unexpected

For many congregations, adapting to the unexpected simply means waiting for something to happen then planning their best approach to meet the challenge. For example, a congregation completes a large addition only to discover their city plans on building a new road cutting off part of the church's building – so the city condemns the property and the congregation has to move. Or a congregation decides it wants a new church, so it sells its existing debt-free church to build a new church on expensive land - financing it with the maximum dollars possible. Because of the recent economic downturn, the church giving drops forty percent and now, unable to finish the project, the church loses everything.

Regency-leaders must be able to deal with uncertainty while leading their church positively into the future. Today many forces act on our society and the church, like trends in technology, energy, demographics, societal values, and the social climate.[48] All of these trends make it difficult to predict any specific future because there are too many variables.[49] Leaders can deal with the predictable forces by creating suitable strategies. They can ignore the unimportant forces since those forces will not result in significant problems. But regency-leaders must learn to deal with the forces that are both unpredictable and important because these forces will result in serious challenges for the church.[50] To help them, there is a tactic regency-leaders can use.

Predicting Trends

The question resounding from many congregations is, "How can we predict what is going to happen in our chaotic and cross-cultural world?" The answer varies based on what church leaders try to predict. First, regency-leaders simply cannot predict some future scenarios – such as the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers. While there had been speculation about information in the hands of national security personnel predicting the attack, the average citizen had no access to that information and no way to prepare.[51] Second, regency-leaders can easily predict some future scenarios because of the number of obvious forces driving those events.[52] The idea of continuous change and our need to learn to deal with change is likely the most predictable scenario we face.[53]

Third, for the remaining possible future scenarios, regency-leaders must become students of the future.[54] They must learn to discover and evaluate the unpredictable and important forces likely to change the church's environment looking for possible extremes that could develop in the future.[55] The regency-leader needs to learn to combine the extremes of the various forces to create word pictures of reasonable scenarios resulting from those combinations.[56] From those scenarios, the leaders need to plan appropriate strategies for each.[57]

Had the leaders of the church that lost everything committed to being students of the future and all that it entails, they would likely have already had a strategy to handle the downturn in the economy. With the scenarios in mind, leaders would have been more sensitive to possible futures, increasing the likelihood of decisions not putting the congregation's ministries at risk. For example, two years ago a leader might have concluded the economy and technology were the two forces most affecting the church. The economic extremes would have been a "robust" or a "depressed" economy. The extremes for technology would have been "rapidly changing" or "serious abandonment." Combining the extremes would result in four plausible futures, one of which would have been a depressed economy and rapidly changing technology, the world our churches find themselves in today. While we often cannot pinpoint change, increasingly the unexpected happens and we must learn to adapt and thrive through change.[58]

Change has become constant and broad in its influence. In my early banking career we used to evaluate markets within our national boundaries; but now we deal with the reality of living in a global market where one country's financial condition can affect the world market.[59] Technology product cycles change so rapidly that when a new product makes it to the market, another developer is already creating a better innovation.[60] The communication media gives instant access to people around the globe, changing the whole world into local neighborhoods.[61]

Today's regency-leaders need to disciple the next generation of leaders who will have the selfless mind-set necessary to move beyond what they can easily foresee if they are to be comfortable with unknown conditions which may emerge in the future. This will be in contrast to limiting themselves to a narrow perspective based solely on their present experience.[62] Churches will need leaders who are students of the future able to create possible scenarios with enough creativity to build strategies to address the various scenarios our future churches might encounter.

Qualities Needed

During times of turmoil and apprehension, regency-leaders will need to be credible with selfless hearts for people to help their followers deal with the turmoil of living in an unpredictable world.[63] They will need to have the necessary knowledge and experience to

develop the capability to perform during chaotic conditions.[64] This capability does not imply regency-leaders have experienced every specific condition the church may face. Rather, regency-leaders will have the capacity to address unique conditions, clearly define the problems, and creatively plan strategies to deal with the conditions. The regency-leader will need the competence and confidence to deal effectively with conditions he or she has never experienced.

A regency-leader will live a life displaying consistent honorable intent and integrity.[65] It is this honorable intent and integrity that provides the platform on which the regency-leader builds credibility in his or her congregation.[66] Church members' trust grows (or dies) based on their view of their leader's integrity.[67]

A regency-leader will build personal credibility by valuing people.[68] It is critical during chaotic times that every member believes that all share the common interests of the organization and its people.[69] One of the greatest barriers to successful transition through turbulence is followers viewing a leader as self-serving.[70] In a caring environment, members of an organization will more readily take risks and accept challenges knowing the leader is willing to make personal sacrifices for them and the organization.[71]

A regency-leader is an intentional and continual learner.[72] Gone are the days when a person attends school and then works a lifetime drawing on only their school experience. To stay capable to deal with the rapidly changing and chaotic environment, a regency-leader must be a continuous learner and must be developing future leaders and others to do the same.[73] The regency-leader must encourage everyone in the organization to be continuously growing in their capability for serving the organization.[74] A key to a whole organization or congregation becoming learners pivots on the regency-leader creating an atmosphere conducive to making use of their new skills and knowledge.[75]

A regency-leader must think as a cosmopolitan, comfortable with a wide diversity of people[76] – ethnically, culturally, and economically. With the new global workforce and increased personal mobility, congregations are finding growing diversity within their body.[77] As cosmopolitans, regency-leaders must work toward breaking down the barriers between believers and help everyone to become comfortable with people different from themselves.[78] For all to become comfortable with diversity, a key is seeing everyone as God's unique creation.[79]

Regency-leaders must prepare themselves and others for continued chaos. Given the continuous nature of change today, regency-leaders cannot protect the congregation from change; therefore they will have to lead the congregation successfully through change.[80] The church must come to grips with the reality that turbulence and chaos will remain a part of life's experience.[81]

The regency-leader is not a heroic leader; the regency-leader simply recognizes his or her role as a representative of the King. The regency-leader works with the Spirit's guidance to flexibly lead God's people through these chaotic times.

Creativity

Since today we are dealing with many never-experienced-before problems, we will have an equally inexperienced stock of solutions from which to draw. As a result, our future depends on our ability to become creative in our analysis of any new problem and in our strategies to resolve our problems.[82] But before a church can hope for much creativity from the members,

regency-leaders must create an atmosphere that encourages creativity.[83] Church leaders will struggle with people's willingness to be creative because people are often afraid of embarrassment or they fear leadership will not value their creative efforts.[84] In addition, in times of chaos people pull their thinking back into places of safety where life made more sense and they felt more in control.[85]

The key to creating an atmosphere of creativity is for leaders to recognize and reward effort and "trial and error" even when the results are not "successful."[86] People must have some sense of safety, openness, and friendship to be willing to express ideas openly, to defer their unproven assumptions, and to try something new. Regency-leaders need to create an environment where ideas are "talked through" rather than debated and where people listen while withholding judgment. God put creativity in nearly all children. The regency-leader's task is to resurface this creativity in adults. How can leaders do this?

Regent-leaders can redefine success by reclassifying ideas not as "failures," but as "near successes." It is like sailing from Oregon to Hawaii. You cannot just set the sail and rudder one time and arrive at your destination; you must continually correct thousands of "near successes" until you reach your goal, a task of true "trial and error." Sailors find no reason to debase themselves because they must adjustments along the way. In the same way, regency-leaders and their congregations need to celebrate ideas that might need adjustments many times before they reach their goal. In today's turbulent world, there is a high likelihood nearly every idea will need adjustment before reaching the target. This normal "trial and error" should be the norm in every congregation.

Regency-leaders can launch strategic activities to encourage creative thinking. They can strategically guide conversations in new directions. Regency-leaders can help a group identify their assumptions and then suggest reversing those assumptions to see what creative ideas surface. They can become models of creativity in the manner they encourage creativity within the congregation.

Who Will Lead in the Future?

In his Gospel, Matthew's provided us with a picture of Christ's regency-leadership succession strategy. Matthew introduced it with Christ's heritage of succession listed in the beginning of Matthew. Through his Gospel, Matthew described Christ living an honorable life while selecting and developing those to whom He would leave leadership responsibility. Matthew finishes with Christ's honorable death and His final commissioning of His disciples to reproduce.[87]

In His commissioning of the disciples, Jesus created a new leadership model which this paper labels as regency-leadership. Christ did not pass His authority to His disciples; Christ kept all authority, giving His disciples an ascribed authority. To keep this clear, Christ gave His disciples the Spirit to guide and empower them while He promised to be with them twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This means that from the first eleven disciples until today, Christ remains the head of His church with those in church leadership roles as His regents.

This theory has significant implications. First, Jesus did not go out and hire someone to represent Him; He selected and developed His regency-leaders.[88] When Christ gave His disciples

His final commission, He told them to "make disciples," not put together a search committee with a specific job description.

Christ told His disciples to be intentional about making disciples while they were going about their daily affairs. This does not mean that a regency-leader should just bring people to a decision for Christ. It means that regency-leaders are strategically to develop disciples ready to fill future regency-leadership positions.

Christ told His disciples to baptize those they are making into disciples – to bring their hearts to a place where they fully fall under the lordship of Christ's authority.[89] This commitment is not just an intellectual or strong emotional commitment. This commitment is at a point of fully emptying themselves for Christ. This is critical for future regency-leaders, implying that leaders must never use their role for personal self-interest.

Christ told His disciples to teach those they are making into disciples. Christ did not tell His disciples to teach just what Christ commanded. He told His disciples to teach those they disciple to "observe" (or live out) what Christ commanded. Christ left no room for hypocrisy in His statement. Christ's command to make disciples reflects intent to develop lives into regency-leaders fully living for Christ without personal self-interest.

Conclusion

This paper argues Christ is still head, the One with full authority over His church. If Christ still has all authority then those in current leadership roles have a regency authority with full accountability to Christ the King. Regency-leaders carry out the duties of the regent role fully in behalf of the King. The logical conclusion of the King-regent relation requires regents to never use the regency role for self-interest. It requires regency-leaders to become empty of self in service to their King. This means regency-leaders will not use the regency-leadership role to gain power, recognition, respect or approval from others. This means regency-leaders will continuously keep the interests of Christ, the Gospel, and the family of God ahead of their own interest – emotional or financial.

This paper also argues regency-leadership must be the foundation of Christian leadership development. It is foundational because of people's natural tendency to seek their own interests. Christian regency-leaders are no exception. Throughout life they will continually battle between the desires of the flesh (self-interest) and the desire to remain true to a commitment to serve Christ unselfishly. Regency-leadership, both developing and serving, flows out of a heart emptied of self. From the life emptied for Christ will surface certain characteristics:

- Regency-leaders use Christian ethics to be a compass into the future.

- Regency-leaders continually renew heart, soul, and mind for Christ.

- Regency-leaders keep their life aligned with biblical core values and by it live lives with Godly strategic intent.

- Regency-leaders battle against the influences of the dominant secular society.

- Regency-leaders leverage the external and internal organizational systems.

· Regency-leaders continuously develop the church's organizational design to be adaptable to changing conditions without changing the Gospel message.

· Regency-leaders will guard against unbiblical ideologies while remaining flexible in methods to reach the lost.

· Regency-leaders understand cultural differences and the uniqueness of individuals.

· Regency-leaders are cosmopolitan, comfortable with people of differing cultures.

With these characteristics, regency-leaders will continually grow more skilled and comfortable with the unexpected. They will be students of the future, able to discover existing or likely trends that will drive possible future worlds influencing the church. Regency-leaders will have the love and skill to help others through the turmoil of uncertainty. They will have the confidence in Christ and the competence to engage futures never before experienced. They will have the resourcefulness to build creativity in others to analyze whatever problems arise and to plan strategies to solve those problems.

Most importantly, regency-leaders will identify with the earlier sailing metaphor. Gone are the days when a church can set their strategic sails and rudders once at the beginning of any undertaking. Regency-leaders must assure that "near success" becomes a watchword of the congregation; a place where trial and error become an acceptable and praiseworthy norm.

You as the reader can recognize the chaos and turmoil our churches currently face. You can also see the secular outcome from the use of applied secular leadership theory. This paper challenges you to return to the first-century divine organizational design of regency-leadership. Fully empty yourself for Christ, embracing His permanent and full authority over His creation. Accept your role as Christ's regent committing to stand in the gap for Him in leading the church into our increasingly chaotic world. The future of the church rests in your effectiveness in developing future generations of regency-leaders capable and committed to selflessly guide Christ's church into the emerging world.

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