

A New Breed: Call for a New Generation of Pastoral Leaders by Philip C. Flores, Church Strengthening Ministry, Makati City, Philippines, 2007 (5 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Commitment and Godly Character.

“Yet I have some sobering concerns. I have discovered, first, that a commendable commitment does not always mean competence in doing ministry. Second, an attitude of unwavering love for God may be praiseworthy but it does not guarantee a godly character. The latter jars me more than the former.” (p. 11)

2. No Shortcut.

“In Ezra, we find a model of what leadership development should look like. Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.” Three areas were the focus of Ezra’s life:

Studying God’s Word -- knowledge
Observing God’s Word -- character
Teaching God’s Word -- competence

“It would seem that trainers and equippers of leaders have assumed that character-building is a direct result of increased knowledge and competence. Or maybe it was just unconsciously taken for granted. We have to admit that character-building does not just happen in a training context such as workshops, seminars, or conferences. But such events should emphasize, encourage, and elevate it as top priority. Character is formed when God’s truth exposes our depravity and offers healing and change. The Holy Spirit convicts a servant of Jesus to humbly repent and leads him to unconditionally obey God and His Word. A changed life defines character.

“Jerry White, former president of the Navigators, once said, “Truth without character is empty.

Wisdom without character is hollow. Giftedness without character is useless. Brilliance without character is meaningless.”

“There is no short cut to leadership development. Ezra’s example is a pattern worth following. It is one step at a time of a life-long process. First you learn. Then you apply what you learned. Only then can you teach others what you understood more deeply. Moving from knowledge to ministry is being theoretical, if not hypocritical. We can teach with moral authority only when what we teach is true in our lives. Our inner life overflows into effective ministry.

“The apostle Paul admonished Timothy, “Train yourself to be godly” (1 Tim. 4:7). Timothy was a gifted young leader (see 4:14), yet he needed to train himself in

godliness because godliness is of greater value than physical wellness (4:8). Samson was strong physically, but sadly weak morally. This is a sobering warning to us who lead. Let us make godliness our top priority because in God's agenda, this is what He looks for in us. May we raise the bar higher."(p. 12- 14)

3. Shortage of Shepherd-leaders.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, I believe, fully knew that there would always be a shortage of shepherd-leaders. For when He saw the masses, His heart went out to them, for they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." The workers he was referring to were not simply the farmer-type workers but leaders and the shepherds. The ones with a heart for people. Compassionate. Shepherds who stay with the sheep, in the field, not on the road, nor on a stage, nor in an air-conditioned office. The ones who know how it is to be harassed and helpless. And walk along with the flock. Do we have enough of these shepherd-leaders?" (p. 20-21)

4. Transformational Teaching.

"Transformational teaching occurs when a teacher's life impacts the life of his student. It is a dynamic life-to-life interaction. One passes on to another not merely lesson plans but also vision, goals, commitments, purpose, and the like.

"How does transformational teaching take place? Ezra, the priest and teachers, a learned man in God's Law and its offspring -- a moral code, models for us how to do it. 'For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the law of the Lord and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel' (Ezra 7:10). Notice the progression: first, he studied, then he practiced it, and finally, he taught others. There is a great danger, that in our rush to train others to become teachers, we tend to shortcut the process. We downplay the 'practice' and rush on to 'teaching others.'

The result is alarming -- we have lots of informed minds, but few transformed lives. (p. 34-35)

5. Leaders Today Are Organizational Leaders.

Many of our contemporary leaders, by virtue of their positions in the church hierarchy, have turned into organizational leaders, distant and detached from the very people they are supposed to lead and serve. They are more into controlling rather than connecting; streamlining rather than relating. Running an organization comes before helping people. And then we wonder what went wrong. This is definitely not transformational leadership. (p. 37)