

# Leadership for Our Times Resource Section



## **Purpose**

The challenges facing congregations today often have no easy answers. They require the congregational system to adapt or change to meet new demands. This places special demands on the leader, who must resist the call “for answers” and help people struggle to find adaptive solutions of their own. This module explores the authority of leadership, the changing environment within which we live, and how to respond given the type of challenges being faced.

## **Theological Understanding**

The Bible is full of people who provided leadership and were viewed with authority by God’s people. They exercised leadership in a variety of ways, sometimes reluctantly, and some of them were able to see God’s hand at work even as the world around them was changing and to challenge people to adapt. The prophets of the exile are such leaders, raising questions about how the community will respond to the uncertain future awaiting it in exile. Jesus, too, called his disciples into leadership for a different world than they knew. Our times as well call for leaders who lead in uncertain times.

## **Special Instructions**

The leadership assessment tool in the handouts will need to be prepared in advance.

## **Related Modules**

Conflict Modules I & II  
Family Systems Theory  
Leading Planned Change  
Transition

## **Bibliography**

Bass, Diana Butler. The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church. Herndon, VA, The Alban Institute, 2004 – Bass' first book on thriving mainline congregations in a postmodern world.

\_\_\_\_\_. Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith. San Francisco, CA, HarperSanFrancisco, 2006 – the third of Bass' books on thriving mainline congregations; contains a reflection guide that will help congregations discuss the potential for change in congregational life and leadership.

Bass, Richard, ed. Leadership in Congregations. Herndon, VA, The Alban Institute, 2007 – a collection of essays, many of which appeared in Alban's quarterly publication, *Congregations*, on leadership specifically within the context of congregations.

Cooperrider, David L. and Whitney, Diana. Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2005 – a terrific introduction to Appreciative Inquiry, a way of building on the strengths in an organization, rather than trying to fix its weaknesses; pioneers in this theory the authors present it in a way that is short, concise and clear.

Heifetz, Ronald A. and Linsky, Martin. Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading. Boston, MA, Harvard Business School Publishing, 2002 – a follow- on to Heifetz' earlier work (see below), this book examines types of resistance and provides practical advice on how to address them; incorporates examples of leadership from the nonprofit world which makes the book very accessible to church leaders.

\_\_\_\_\_. Leadership Without Easy Answers. Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 1994 – the classic book about adaptive leadership.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Laurie, Donald L. "The Work of Leadership," Harvard Business Review, December 2001 – provides an overview of Heifetz's theories on adaptive leadership; download from HBR website (<http://hbr.org/> and search by title or author name).

McLaren, Brian D. "Dorothy on Leadership." Rev. Magazine Nov/Dec 2000 – this article on McLaren's web site contrasts the leadership style of the Wizard of Oz (modern) with that of Dorothy (postmodern); a whimsical essay that could generate some interesting discussions (download from [www.brianmclaren.net](http://www.brianmclaren.net); go to Resources, then Published Articles and click on the title).

Robinson, Anthony B. Transforming Congregational Culture. Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003 -- takes Heifetz' work and applies it to congregational leadership and illustrates the impact of the post-modern world on congregational life.

Steinke, Peter L. Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What. Herndon, VA, The Alban Institute, 2006 – using family systems theory, Steinke outlines the leader's role given the situations of our times and provides questions for further exploring the situation facing congregational leaders.

Wheatley, Margaret J. Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time. San Francisco, CA, Berrett-Koehler, 2005 – a collection of articles, all previously published elsewhere that cover issues of leadership in this new age.

\_\_\_\_\_. Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. San Francisco, CA, Berrett-Koehler, 1999 – an introduction to the impact new scientific theory is having on our view of life and organizations.

### **Other Resources**

Building Church Leaders ([www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com](http://www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com)), a website of Christianity Today, offers a number of different training and assessment tools for congregations which may be downloaded for a small fee.

Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: DVD and study guide to accompany Steinke's book by the same name; features Steinke in discussion with others; Chapter Five covers the points made in this module about appropriate leadership reaction to given types of situations; this portion of the DVD runs for about 18 minutes (order from Seraphim Communications; <http://store.seracomm.com>).

## General Outline of Session

1. Opening prayer and meditation (suggested reading Luke 5:1-11)
2. Check-in
3. Introduction and concept of where authority lies (PowerPoint 1-3, Talking Points)
4. Personal style (PowerPoint 4; Talking Points)
5. Assessing personal style (Handouts 1a – 1d [Leadership Style Assessment], individual work and group discussion)
6. Gifts and challenges of style (PowerPoint 5; Talking Points; conversation in pairs; general discussion)
7. Brainstorm list of challenges facing congregations (large group)
8. Technical vs. Adaptive Situations (PowerPoint 6; Talking Points; Handouts 2-3; individual work; small group discussion)
9. Large group debrief, if needed
10. Balcony work (PowerPoint 7-8; Talking Points)
11. Work of adaptive leaders (PowerPoint 9; Talking Points; Handout 4; individual work; small group discussion)
12. Large group debrief, if needed
13. Questions (PowerPoint 10; Talking Points; small or large group sharing)
14. Non-anxious presence (PowerPoint 11-12; Talking Points)
15. Steinke's Model of Influence (PowerPoint 13; Talking Points; individual work; small or large group discussion)
16. Final thoughts (PowerPoint 14-15; Talking Points)
17. Wrap-up and closing prayer

# Leadership for Our Times

## Handout 1a

### Who Am I as a Leader?

Make a list of what you accomplished in various phases of your life. List 2 or 3 accomplishments in each of these categories: Ages 5 to 20; 21 to 49; 50 to 64; 65 to 69; 70 plus.

What do those accomplishments and your behavior in team settings reveal about your leadership strengths? Circle your top SIX (6) strengths from the list below (choose ONLY six).

Thoughtful	Experimenting	Thorough	Reserved
Helpful	Forceful	Analytical	Quick to act
Flexible	Idealistic	Enthusiastic	Receptive
Tenacious	Practical	Trusting	Tactful
Seeks Change	Self-confident	Inspirational	Adaptable
Animated	Controlling	Factual	Economical
Loyal	Risk-taking	Persuasive	Cooperative
Socially Skillful	Responsive	Competitive	Methodical

# Leadership for Our Times

## Handout 1b

### Who Am I as a Leader?

Find the adjectives you circled in Handout 1a in the following descriptions and circle them again to determine what type of leader you are.

**Relater:** Thoughtful, idealistic, trusting, loyal, helpful, receptive, responsive, cooperative.

**Promoter:** Flexible, experimenting, enthusiastic, tactful, adaptable, socially skillful, inspirational, animated

**Analyzer:** Tenacious, practical, economical, reserved, factual, thorough, methodical, analytical

**Director:** Controlling, quick to act, self-confident, seeks change, persuasive, competitive, risk-taker, forceful.

Which of the above has the most adjectives circled? That is your preferred style. (Note: since leadership styles are on a continuum, you may have more than one.)

# Leadership for Our Times Handout 1c

## Who Am I as a Leader?

**Now answer the following questions:**

How do I like to be given information?

How do I make decisions?

What do I need to feel comfortable with change?

What do I need in my work environment to be my best self?

# Leadership for Our Times

## Handout 1d

### Who Am I as a Leader?

**Compare your answers in Handout 1c to the following.**

**Relater:** Learns by following directions. Is hesitant about making decisions. Needs information on how a change will affect him or her. Responds to gentle, specific, and harmonious approach.

**Promoter:** Learns by having fun. Makes decisions ambiguously. Wants to be associated with people in charge of a change. Responds to stimulating, open, and flexible approach.

**Analyzer:** Learns by figuring it out. Makes decisions slowly. Wants to know rationale for change. Responds to patient, organized, and logical approach.

**Director:** Learns by doing it own way. Makes decisions quickly. Needs to be assured he or she will not lose power or control with a change. Responds to businesslike, time-conscious, and factual approach.

To what extent does the description fit? Are there discrepancies?

Is the style you most fit the same as the one you identified in Handout 1b? What kind of a leadership style do you see as your preferred one?



## Leadership for Our Times Handout 2

### Technical vs. Adaptive Work

Situation	Problem Definition	Solution & Implementation	Primary Locus of Responsibility	Kind of Work	Leadership Role	Example
<b>Type I Technical Situation</b>	Clear	Clear	Physician	Technical	Doctor has the expertise and the responsibility; patient depends upon doctor's knowledge, doctor depends upon patient's trust.	Broken bone; administration of antibiotic.
<b>Type II Technical/Adaptive Situation</b>	Clear	Requires learning	Physician and Patient	Technical and Adaptive	Doctor may have a solution in mind but cannot implement it. The patient must learn and implement new behavior to affect a cure.	Stress to be treated with diet, exercise, and workload limits.
<b>Type III Adaptive Situation</b>	Requires learning	Requires learning	Patient more than Physician	Adaptive	Doctor must induce learning (both for doctor and patient) in order to define both the problem and the solution.	Terminal cancer in which the cancer is the "condition" and not the problem. The primary problem is the patient's adaption to a harsh reality.

## Leadership for Our Times Handout 3

Identify the challenges facing your congregation today and write them down in the space below.

Take each of the challenges you identified, and use the model of technical to adaptive work to determine what types of challenges your congregation is facing. Are the challenges purely technical (e.g., replacing a leaking roof), purely adaptive (e.g., meeting the needs of a newly diverse congregation) or somewhere in-between? Make a note next to each one listing its type.

Pick a major challenge that is adaptive (or a mix) in nature. How would you define the “problem,” how clear is the solution, who needs to be involved, and should your role be one of expert or facilitator or a combination?

## **Leadership for Our Times Handout 4**

Go back to the adaptive challenge you identified facing your congregation.

What do you see as the underlying causes?

What is the current balance between action and agreement? What would you like that balance to be?

What have you done to maintain the focus on the problem? What distractions are there?

To what extent do others see the need to change? To what extent do they see that they are responsible?

Where/who are the voices of dissent? What are you doing to protect them?

Given your analysis, what characteristics of your leadership style are helpful? What might you want to modify about your leadership style?