

MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

ADVANCED ORIENTATION SEMINAR

Theme: “The Process of Supervised Training”

Integrated Model for Spiritual Leadership

By: Larry G. Hess

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is complex and often confusing. Spiritual leadership must embrace the Word of God and the characteristics of Jesus Christ. Spiritual leadership is a unique integration of essential requirements, necessary skills, and accurate thinking.

A spiritual leader should seek to integrate into his/her life each of the components represented in the model presented in this study. Leadership requires knowledge and insight into ones self and into the difficulties associated with personal growth and effectiveness.

In the secular world of leadership, integration and assimilation of all the major components of leadership are not valued as necessary. Some leaders tend to focus only on one or a few qualities/components. Limitations of balanced leadership strengths may not be a problem for some role expectations.

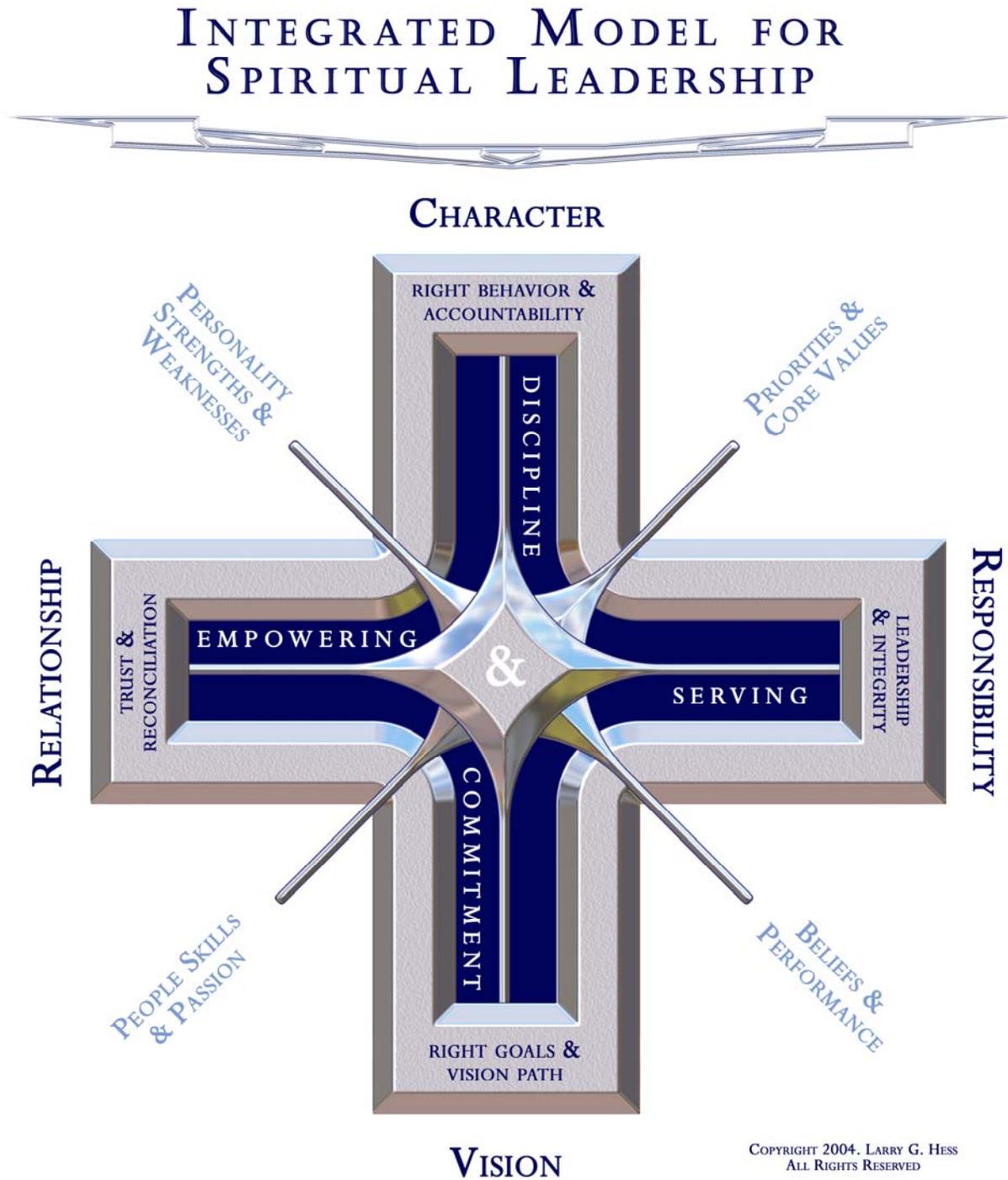
In spiritual leadership, balance and integration of as many qualities as possible is essential for maximum effectiveness. A spiritual leader should be a transformational leader who helps followers to embrace a vision of a preferred future.

Leaders inspire and empower followers to achieve new levels of personal performance and fulfillment. When spiritual leaders are trusted and respected, followers tend to internalize the vision and goals articulated by the leader.

The integrated model presented in this lecture will describe the major components necessary for leaders to function interdependently with others. Spiritual leaders demonstrate remarkable levels of personality accountability and credibility. They model, with great integrity, the attitudes and

actions they desire from team members and the congregation.

The chart below addresses the major components in an “Integrated Model for Spiritual Leadership.”



I. CHARACTER

A spiritual leader is a person who really wants to reach his/her God-given potential in every area of his/her life. An integrated model of spiritual leadership is built upon our character, which requires discipline to be faithful to God and true to who we really are inside.

Character gives a sense of dependability to our leadership and enables us to live a life that encourages others to follow. In an attempt to be a leader, some people have resorted to developing the appearance of a leader rather than developing the **character** of a leader.

Professional consultants are able to teach “image control” or “reputation management” for aspiring leaders who seek to create the perception that they are authentic and genuinely qualified to lead. People, with help, can generate a lot of hype, but they are really only pseudo leaders. They have image, but no character.

Influence is a key word associated today with leadership. People can seek to gain influence over others in the three following illegitimate ways:

- **Position** – Achieving a position does not guarantee character. People who use political or unethical means to acquire positions lack integrity. Oswald Sanders asked, “Should it not be the office that seeks the man, rather than the man the office?” Holding a leadership position in a Christian organization does not automatically assure God’s anointing or pleasure. Some leaders use their position to go further to pursue influence over people by using force and/or manipulation.
- **Power** – Leaders invite rebellion when they use force to achieve their goals. The my-way-or-the-highway does not work in the church or in the business world. Pastors have used many strong-arm tactics to get their way. Some have volatile tempers. They are charming and cordial as long as church members submit to their leadership. But when challenged, they become angry and lambaste anyone who dares to oppose them. Some have used the pulpit as a platform or soapbox to castigate those who disagree with them. Some pastors lobby support from influential

members as if they were seeking to get a bill passed through Congress. Some ostracize their detractors or bully people into submission.

Spiritual dictatorships can be the most oppressive form of tyranny. Such leaders are intolerant of those who would challenge them.

- **Personality** – People often follow leaders because of their charm and winsome personality. Popular pastors have used their confident, impressive, persuasive personality to control or dominate people for selfish reasons. Often pastor-search-committees erroneously look for a striking and charismatic personality whose allure can attract new members. Charisma is never more important than character.

Spiritual leaders, of all people, ought to be known for their honesty, their integrity, and their character. Character is manifested in **right behavior** and in **accountability**. Our true purpose in life is a reflection of our character.

Our sense of purpose is derived from the deepest part of our souls. It is based on ethics, morals, and values that are spiritual principles. Our purpose shapes our vision and goals. Our purpose is our highest force that gives us a sense of divine direction.

Our purpose and character shape our relationships. We can either use people or love them. If our purpose is holy and unselfish, we will be givers, not takers. Godly character insures that our actions will be consistent with our words, and we willingly accept the need for accountability to God and those we serve.

II. VISION

Character and vision interact to make the leader disciplined and accountable in order to model commitment to God's vision. Leadership is about moving people on to God's agenda. Vision flows out of a commitment to the mission. The mission can be achieved through a process of implementing the vision path as we move toward the right goals with commitment and unity.

Visions are exhilarating and must be clear, shared, and compelling. Visions are about a preferred future that can mobilize people to enthusiastically follow spiritual leadership.

People look to visionary leaders who possess the skills necessary to perform in their role and achieve results. Churches tend to measure success by focusing on attendance, seats filled in the auditorium, and amount of money in the offerings. Peter Drucker says that the ultimate measure of leadership is “results.”

According to the expectations of many, successful leaders must be people who get things done. Leadership should focus on building great teams, building unity, and building healthy churches.

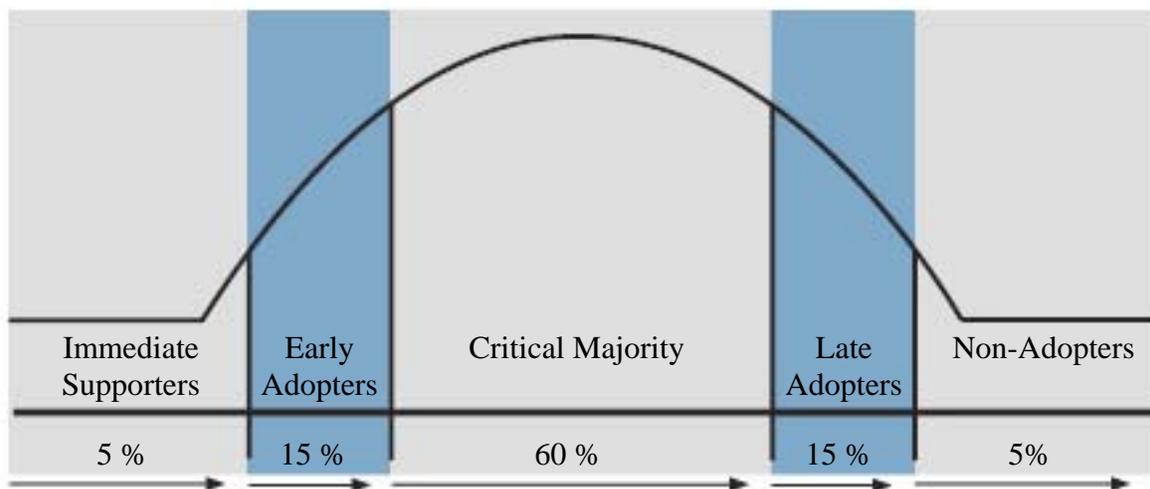
The pastor does not do all of the thinking for the church. Pastors must involve the right people in leadership and build consensus and commitment to God’s vision and agenda. Leaders fail when they pursue their goals for achievement but leave people by the wayside, uninvolved and uncommitted to the vision.

Spiritual leaders seek to achieve acceptance for and commitment to the vision as people align themselves to move forward on a transformational journey. The journey usually involves **change**; leaders experience some degree of resistance to change. A strategy for overcoming resistance and aligning for unity requires the building blocks of unity on the vision path to success.



Managing resistance to change requires an understanding of how people tend to come to a position of acceptance of the vision and to unity of purpose. In building unity, a spiritual leader looks for more than mere compliance. They look to achieve acceptance and alignment with the necessary change and transformational process. The following chart illustrates the path a congregation follows in taking ownership of a projected change or a new vision.

Acceptance Process & Strategy for Change



This process is impacted by the personality traits of the group. Some people are naturally more trusting (immediate supporters and early adopters), while other types tend to be distrusting (late adopters and some are distrustful). Trusting personality traits are:

- Accommodating
- Warm and altruistic
- Adaptive
- Mature
- Emotionally stable
- Cooperative
- Spontaneous
- Trusting and unsuspecting
- Accepting
- Genuine
- Self-assured
- Open to change

- Deferential
- Restrained and careful
- Sensitive
- Affiliative
- Tolerant and flexible
- Patient

Distrusting Personality traits are:

- Controlling
- Directive
- Methodical
- Reserved and impersonal
- Reactive
- Emotionally changeable
- Bold
- Vigilant and suspicious
- Skeptical and wary
- Private
- Apprehensive and self-doubting
- Self-reliant
- Perfectionist
- Tense and impatient

III. RELATIONSHIPS

A spiritual leader uses his/her skills in the **relationship** component to empower and to serve others. As a leader's character is expressed in relationships, he/she will be able to earn trust and bring about reconciliation. Positive relationships and trust are necessary if the vision is to be realized.

A spiritual leader usually works with volunteers and lacks the command authority of a CEO or a general. The greatest asset of a spiritual leader is the relationships built with people. No matter how gifted the leaders are or how exciting the vision, leaders will not lead for long if they are not able to build and maintain strong relationships and partnerships.

Trust busters are present in every church and on every ministry team, especially at the higher levels of leadership.

COMMON TRUST BUSTERS

- **Personality factor** – character flaws and extreme temperament traits/weaknesses
- **Expansive ambitions** – always concerned about looking good and being in control
- **Bigger egos and higher stakes** – can cause leaders to play on the natural fears and insecurities of people
- **Insincere** – not completely honest, withholding information
- **Controlling nature** – want to control all the decisions
- **Defensive** – defends own opinions and does not listen to others; moves ahead without adequate facts
- **Distrustful** – tends not to show consideration for teammates; leaves them out if they think that they might disagree, even when it is obvious they have a stake in the decision/action

KEY TRUST BUILDERS

- **Honesty and openness** – exhibits integrity and authenticity; share their true feelings without deceit
- **Transparency** – does not have private, hidden agenda covered with hypocrisy
- **Genuinely caring** – is concerned about the needs of others as evidenced by actions, not just words
- **Listen** – listens to people carefully; is not judgmental or overly critical
- **Value other people's opinions** – seeks input from key advisors and trusted partners before making decisions
- **Show empathy** – demonstrates compassion by reaching out to give support and help to others

Trust can be built in relationships instead of suspicion and conflict. Trust is slow to build, yet can come crashing down quickly. Trust can take years of persistence and character to construct. Trust is fragile. It must be handled with care.

A leader must have trust; it is the air that he/she breathes. There are no perfect models, no flawless characters, or purely selfless leaders. However, we must remain intensely focused to keep trust and integrity.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

Integrity is the foundation of leadership responsibility. Integrity and honesty are essential for sound decisions, mutual trust, and credibility. Leaders are responsible for truthfulness, fairness, loyalty, good judgment, accountability, clear priorities, and strong values.

Responsible leadership demands that we have the courage and self-confidence to live out integrity in the pressure cooker test of leadership.

Responsibility in spiritual leadership requires emotional stability and maturity.

Characteristics of stable, mature, and responsible leaders:

1. Have ego strength sufficient to overcome frustration or loss with the power of a resilient mindset
2. Are not intimidated by problems and are not overwhelmed
3. Have a good sense of timing and know how to manage priorities
4. Avoid tendency to procrastinate
5. Do not set unreachable goals
6. Do not engage in self-blame and criticism but maintain a positive self-image
7. Are able to anticipate unpleasant events and face them with reinforcing self-talk

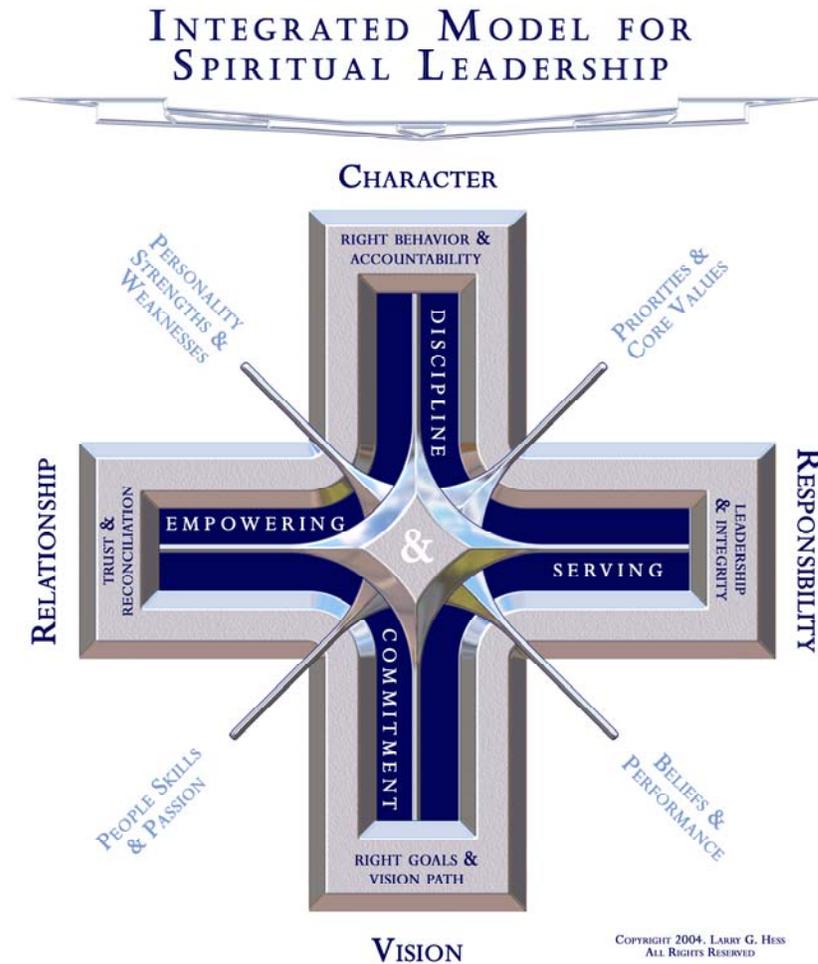
Characteristics of leaders who are less emotional stable and mature:

1. Are reactive and emotionally changeable under stress
2. Are impulsive and inconsistent in conflict

3. Excessively criticizes and seek to control people
4. Are angry and tend to reject people, threaten abandonment, or excessively punish people with an emphasis on perfectionism
5. Neglect congruent thinking about realistic consequences of their negative reactions
6. Promote to followers an excessive dependence of their approval as the leader
7. Subject people to double binds or no win situations when in conflict
8. Are apprehensive, guilt prone, self-reproaching, insecure, and worried
9. Are overly driven, tense, and frustrated
10. Are undisciplined, lax, follow their urges, and are careless of social rules

Spiritual leaders should be responsible and remember that people are watching them to see if they walk the talk, if they are consistent and emotionally stable. Integrity and emotional stability form the bedrock that supports any leadership effort.

The components of responsibility and relationships are linked and essential in achieving the goals of leadership.



Leaders are responsible for their beliefs and for their performance. Leaders need to be both relationship oriented (possess good people skills) and results oriented (task driven.)

A person's leadership performance hinges on results and requires that leaders know where they are going and are capable of and committed to take others with them. A few characteristics of high performance leaders are:

- Straightforward and direct with clear communications about expectations
- Have a strong work ethic
- See the big picture and are visionary and strategic
- A decisive yet sensitive person who is firm but flexible
- A good problem solver
- High expectations of self and of others
- Focused on the mission, the goals, and necessary tasks

- Balanced and emotionally adaptable
- Is proactive to initiate positive actions that are consistent with beliefs
- Are committed to excellence, pays attention to details, and motivates others to achieve within their capabilities

A leader's role is to ensure success by communicating the vision, defining the goals, ensuring high standards, resolve problems, make key decisions, hold people accountable, and model integrity.

Often results-oriented leaders place upon themselves or on others unrealistic expectations.

Without a good balance between relationships and responsibility, the frantic pace of a driven workaholic can cause the leader's emotional engine to shut down and bring him/her to a grinding halt.

The character of Jesus Christ and the grace of God can liberate us from failure in relationships, from self-defeating behaviors, unresolved conflicts, and from the poison of unrealistic expectations. We should again be comforted by the words of Jesus to those oppressed:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gently and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light: (Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV).

Successful spiritual leaders work at balancing relationship skills with responsibility skills. They seek to be competent in skills where they tend to be the weakest. People will not follow weak, tyrannical, or incompetent leaders.

Integrating all of the major components of spiritual leadership is never easy. However, leaders must:

- Walk the talk
- Be accountable and withstand scrutiny
- Make difficult choices
- Continue to grow and develop skills and personal strengths

- Remain flexible and respond appropriately
- Keep a balance in this integrated model of leadership
- Interact with peers and mentors who can help leaders stay on the right path

Spiritual leaders need to hear the message that God spoke to Joshua when He said, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

CONCLUSION

An integrated model for spiritual leadership looks at four major components of leadership and how they need to balance and compliment each other.

Character requires discipline and accountable behavior to achieve our priorities in keeping with our core values. **Priorities** and **core values** can only be maintained through **responsibility** based on integrity, which reflect our commitment to **beliefs** and **performance**.

Our **vision** must come from God and must be carefully discerned and articulated to bring about positive change that is clear, shared, and compelling – a vision that is matched with the **right goals** and **vision path**.

Commitment is most critical for achieving the right goals and maintaining the vision path necessary to fulfill our true mission. Commitment recognizes that following God’s path is a never-ending process.

A spiritual leader who has character will seek to build **relationships** of trust and reconciliation, which empowers people to be part of God’s vision. Leaders seek to overcome personality weaknesses that can be their dark side. They build on their personality strength to serve people with integrity and **responsibility**.

Spiritual leaders seek to be used by God to transform people and the church through **disciplined character, visionary commitment, empowering relationships, and serving responsibility**. Through the skills of accountability, integrity, vision, and trust people can come together in unity to achieve the impossible for the glory of God.