

New Roots Review

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Transformational Leadership

by Fred Wilgenburg



**NEW ROOTS
MINISTRY**

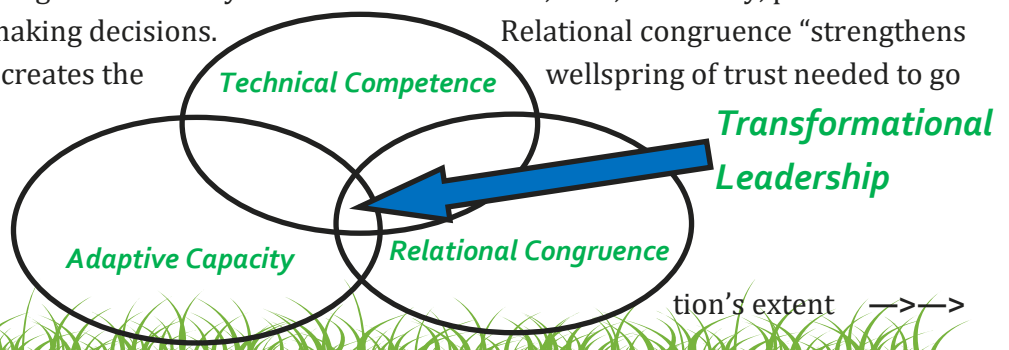
In the “Louisiana Purchase” of 1803, the US bought from France land that extended from present-day Louisiana to Montana, nearly doubling the size of the country. The next year, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the Corps of Discovery, led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, to find a passageway from the Mississippi River, west to the Pacific Ocean. The “Lewis and Clark Expedition” went from May 1804 to November 1805.

Most challenging for the journey, which began in St. Louis, was coming to Great Falls, Montana, and finding out that, different from what was anticipated, the Missouri River did not extend further. To keep going west, they would have to abandon their canoes and trek over the Rocky Mountains, eventually to another river system.

The book, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* by Tod Bolsinger, uses the Lewis and Clark Expedition, especially the challenge of crossing the Rocky Mountain range, to illustrate how organizations often need to be able to adjust and change to move forward effectively. While its focus is on church leadership, which is why I will adjust this article and send it to the 65+ immigrant pastors and churches to whom New Roots Ministry reaches out, the book could be helpful for any organization. **Here are some points made:**

“We need to press on to the uncharted territory of making traditional churches missionary churches.” That’s a big statement as the majority of churches in the US could be considered traditional, so what does it mean? Basically, “local churches must be continually moving out, extending themselves into the world, being the missional, witnessing communities they were called into being.” True, as churches, and as people of the Church, we are commissioned by Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20) to make disciples of all nations. To help a church or organization to most effectively fulfill its mission, the author emphasizes the need for **transformational leadership**, as illustrated in the diagram below. Transformational leadership lies at the overlapping intersection of three components: technical competence, relational congruence and adaptive capacity. Leaders need to provide evidence that they are Technically Competent “on the map” in administering an organization’s key functions, before people will follow them “off the map into uncharted territory.” A leader needs Adaptive Capacity, which is described as the ability to lead a process of shifting values, habits, and behaviors in order to grow and discover solutions to the challenges brought on by a changing world. His/her commitment to personal transformation will be part of that. A leader provides Relational Congruence as they demonstrate character, care, constancy, personal maturity, and emotional stability when making decisions. the bonds, deepens the affection, and creates the off the map.”

Transformational Leadership is key when going through “organizational transformation,” and the difficulty of that depends much on an organiza-



Darrick is an excellent volunteer driving trainer for immigrant adults. Yekal and Yeab are siblings who came from Ethiopia a few months ago. They are our 39th & 40th students. **We need more trainers.** We keep it safe with braking-tools, and students provide an insured car for training.

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(continued from page 1) of being set-in-its-ways. "Even if we agree that we are in an adapt-or-die moment, the urgency of the situation is not enough...." In a study of those who were faced with exactly that choice—stop drinking or you will die, stop smoking or you will die, change your diet now or you will die—90% choose to risk death.

But as people of faith, change is part of our spiritual process—repentance, redemption, transformation, sanctification. Most of us would agree that God wants us to be of the 10% who adapt, as referred to in the above paragraph, especially when we consider the importance of the message that we represent—the Gospel. But,

"thriving in uncharted territory," as Lewis and Clark did when they abandoned their canoes and hiked the Rocky Mountains, is very challenging. As described on the first page, it takes transformational leaders who can take their organization through diverse terrains. The author highlights the following in leading an organization through change: "The most critical attribute a congregation must have to thrive in uncharted territory is a healthy organizational cul-

ture.... Organizational culture is the group norms of behavior and the underlying shared values that help keep those norms in place. In short, organizational culture is "the way we do things around here." It is an organization's DNA, its default functioning, and it dominates in times of stress and change." Have you ever heard the quote, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast"? So true. If leaders show little or no respect for an organization's DNA, its culture, yet he/she is trying to bring in new strategies to cause change, they will be unsuccessful. The culture probably needs adjustment, but adjust carefully, in part by affirming and leaving in place cultural pieces that are good. When doing big change, the author suggests having not only a "transformation team," but also a "maintaining mission group." The maintaining mission group "actively voices support for the other team, while keeping a steady hand at the wheel and monitoring the inevitable anxiety. They provide cover for the transformation team, while making sure that the community feels safe while a few are venturing forth."

The author describes the differences between management and leadership in this way: "management skillfully helps a group accomplish what they want to do, while leadership is energizing a community of people toward accomplishing a shared mission within a changing world," and while change may be disappointing, a good leader does it "at a rate that the people can absorb." To be successful in leading through change, a leader personally needs a "healthy separation of self and their role." This is part of differentiation, which is "a challenging stance of being separate from the emotional gravity of an organizational system without having to separate from it."

This article provides just a small amount from *Canoeing the Mountains*.... **I recommend reading it!**

We can all improve as leaders to varying extents, whether that be for our families, our businesses, or our churches. May we find much fulfillment as we align with God so He can guide us in growing within changes.

Paul to the young leader, Timothy: "Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

What is New Roots Ministry?

We are all about "equipping immigrants & engaging the local church." This is done through workplace chaplaincy at Smithfield Foods & places where immigrants have a large presence, through Timothy Leadership Training, through hosting special educational events, through empowering immigrant pastors, leaders, and their churches, through offering unique Service Opportunities—serve in, or visit, stores owned by immigrants, then hear their stories, through our Liaison ministry (English language training, helping to adapt to a new culture & community, sharing our Good News), through driver training for immigrant adults, and through Everyday-Ambassadors Practicum.



Abraham's story of rising from being a "lost boy" of Sudan, to presently being an Episcopalian pastor and a college student, is remarkable.