
INTRODUCTION

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When I studied for my doctorate in educational leadership, my first class required all of us to read *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*. These editors produced more than a thousand pages of definitions, examples, and historical notes related to the innumerable definitions of leadership. Essentially, we discovered together that each person offers his or her own definition within the broad category of leadership.

Each year, the *JRL* editorial team attempts to expand the exploration and understanding of the changing dynamics of leadership in religiously affiliated contexts. Given the natural tendency to retreat when identity seems threatened, and to conserve what folks believe to be core values in times of radical change, the *Journal* seeks to expand horizons and move pastoral imagination in multiple directions. The current issue continues this effort.

First, Sarah Drummond advances her rumination on the educational process related to equipping religious leaders for uncertain times. In previous issues, this scholar of ministerial leadership explored the intersection of learning, leadership, and change. Subsequently, Drummond offered an example of institutional change as she contemplated the impact of changing a Master of Divinity curriculum so that graduates were more prepared to lead the church-related institutions of the twenty-first century. In this issue, she examines the cost of change, its pain. As Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky revealed so well in *Leadership on the Line*, the leader must address pain and loss in leading change. Drummond explores the cost of pain and loss as the leader attempts to continue momentum for the change.

Next, Jamin Hübner reflects on one of the major causes of pain and frustration in changing curriculum: the outside forces of the State Apparatus in Higher Education. Hübner builds on articles published in the 2015 edition of this journal and considers in-depth how leaders and organizations overcome other outside institutional roadblocks. He argues that innovation is often truncated by limitations imposed by state apparatuses.

He also considers the cost to the institutions as they attempt to innovate, and, like Drummond, ponders the impact of emotional frustration and pain on the forward momentum of organizational change.

Third, Stephen V. Sprinkle offers insight on a specific type of curricular innovation in ministerial formation. As the director of field education, Sprinkle explores how a recent course in ministerial leadership particularly impacted all participants with new theological understanding of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community (LGBTQ). Like Drummond and Hübner, Sprinkle moves the boundary a bit. Indeed, he “opens new frontiers of thought and research” as he recounts the experience of working with ministerial leaders toward the goal of interpreting contextual challenges and responding theologically and practically.

Next, Michael Wilburn connects theological consideration of anthropology, eschatology, and teleology with leadership styles that impact followers. Linking the goals of relationality and resurrection as essential to the Christian response to an active God, Wilburn argues that situational leadership allows leaders and followers to impact each other as they move together toward the goal of Christian, Christ-centered community. The process, he contends, “is the culmination of substantive, functional, and relational views of the image of God.”

Moving the theological reflection in a more “preaching of the Word” direction, Anne Whitney offers a study conducted with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) ordained ministers. She presents research related to the impact of pastoral leaders using the written word to communicate. Linking writing, preaching, and leading, Whitney offers insight from her in-depth interviews with Lutheran pastors.

Finally, Theresa F. Latini employs some of the written reflection demonstrated so far in this issue. She considers how leaders embody the Gospel imperative to lead from abundance. Centering her reflections on a biblical framework, Latini contends that leaders need to develop a spirituality that flows from an abundant God. Using the Gospel of John, she suggests practices of mindfulness, active mourning, and listening circles

to assist the pastoral leader in activating the lives of Christian communities. She works with a case study of a particular community that found new life in these practices. Indeed, the insights from research in the last article in this issue address some of the feeling of pain described in the first article.

Through these articles, then, the authors offer a variety of insights from multiple social locations. Presenting original research-based scholarship as well as deep theological insight, the articles ask pastoral leaders to remember that pain, loss, and outside forces indeed impact forward movement, and cost the leader energy and momentum. In addition, the authors provide options for religious leaders as they sustain active spiritual lives in the midst of the challenges of leading change. We hope you learn and enjoy!

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