LEADERSHIP FOR POSITIVE CHANGE: PERSPECTIVES OF 12 LIBERAL LEADERS

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This qualitative study investigated the perceptions of 12 liberal contemporary leaders regarding the role of the moral leader as a positive change agent. The leaders were selected by graduate students at a private Catholic university in South Florida based on a moral leadership rating-scale survey. The leaders were asked about their perceptions of themselves as positive change agents and how they empower others. The results indicated that the interviewees all believe that they are positive change agents and that they empower others by getting them to participate, by encouraging, by being examples, by raising their consciousness, and by helping them to discover their own power and interests.

Leadership has many definitions. Rost (1995) contends that there is no commonly accepted definition of leadership, and Kanungo and Mendonca (1998) maintain that moral and ethical leadership is conduct that influences followers' values, beliefs, and behaviors so that organizational objectives can be achieved through the followers. Sergiovanni (1990), in his discussion of school leaders, states that moral leadership "taps the spirit," and suggests that the moral leader is credible, honest, forthright, and sincere (p. 28). Most leadership theorists, however, agree that leadership relates to influence, for good or for ill (Bass, 1985; Bennis, 1984; Greenleaf, 1977; Luke, 1991; Ramey, 1991; Yukl, 1994). Roepke (1995) maintains that his evaluation of leadership examines what he calls the essentials: human values, moral responsibility, and idealism. The definitions of moral leadership that were used for this study assert that moral leaders are those who: 1) have a positive, lasting effect or influence on others and the world, 2) aim to raise the consciousness of their followers, and 3) motivate those influenced to

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transcend self-interest for the good of the group (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Roepke, 1995).

Cultural problems lead to a need for leaders who are positive change agents. A significant problem is that there is an increasing lack of faith in leaders and institutions. Gaudiani (1997) opines that many citizens no longer have faith in their leaders. Another concern is the influence of the media and the conforming influence of the peer culture on students. For example, according to Lisman (1998), students are passive learners who want to be entertained because they are malnourished by a media diet of passive entertainment. He adds that the overwhelmingly large amount of information that they receive together with an inadequate preparation to make moral decisions has led to an indifference and cynicism about ethics. Dalton and Petrie (1997) agree that the negative and conforming influence of peer culture often devalues the educational goals of moral and civic responsibility.

Regarding schools, Sergiovanni (1990) believes that leaders need to restructure the chains of command so that followers are not connected to leaders in a hierarchical sense and so that together they can change the content of "schools' 'silent language' from bureaucratic to moral" (p. 153). Furthermore, Sergiovanni (1995) claims that the job of the school principal is to transform the school from an organization to an institution, and the job of the school is to transform its students "not only by providing them with knowledge and skills but by building *character* and instilling *virtue*" (p. 309).

There are problems in business as well as in education concerning how leaders need to shape systems in positive ways. For example, J. Gardner (1984) asserts that many corporate leaders agree that it is necessary and possible to redesign large-scale systems in such a way that they release energy, motivate, and invite individual initiative. Corporate leaders continue to ask themselves how they can move from huge central staffs, complex organizational charts, and a morale-destroying impersonality, and how they can organize and encourage individual responsibility and identification with shared goals. Briskin (1996) agrees that corporate structures can be problematic for individual employees; organizations become the workers' keepers, watching over them, directing them, and attempting to control their actions. He adds that this power is an obstacle to the soul because it seeks its surrender. Furthermore, according to Droel (1997), another problem is that many business leaders are not interested in corporate stewardship and advancing the common good.

Regarding public service, Lewis (1991) maintains that ethical considerations often have little to do with public decision making. He asserts that an ethic of neutrality denies that morality is possible in public bureaucracies, and in his opinion this happens because public managers are not encouraged to follow their own moral principles but rather to follow the decisions and policies of the organization. Thus, ethical neutrality transforms bureaucracy

into an assembly line. Luke (1991) concurs, but adds that public administration makes new demands on policymakers and contends that although governmental ethics are currently preoccupied with concerns for individual behavior, these ethics must now include a theory of policy choices. This shift from behavioral ethics to policy ethics is a new ethical frontier.

Ciulla (1995) maintains that there is a need for research into leadership ethics in order to help answer questions such as "What sort of person should lead?" and "What are the moral responsibilities of leadership?" (p. 18). Roepke (1995) claims that the most pressing need in society today is that of moral leadership and several questions arise when people study leadership. One question is what or who helps to create the difference between leaders whose effects are positive and leaders whose effects are negative. Who are the leaders who would fit Burns' (1978) description of leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation? These are leaders who aim to raise the consciousness of their followers by appealing to moral values such as liberty, justice, equality, peace, and humanitarianism, not to baser emotions such as fear, greed, jealousy, or hatred (Yukl, 1994). Burns has called them transformational leaders. The question of how leaders empower others also arises. Oakley and Krug (1991) maintain that leaders must not only show others how to achieve their visions, but they must inspire them as well.

Considering these problems, questions, and concerns, the primary questions of this study were (1) Do you consider yourself a change agent, one who changes environments in a positive way? and (2) How do you empower others to be change agents?

Selected moral leadership models were used for this study, including servant leadership and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Covey, 1990; Greenleaf, 1977; Peck, 1993; Ramey, 1991). Greenleaf, one of the most influential writers on the subjects of management and leadership, emphasized the concepts of servant leaders and servant leadership. To answer the questions of who is a servant leader and what is servant leadership, Peck (1993) contends that servant leaders are ones who serve primarily and lead secondarily. Greenleaf's (1977) approach is that people should look at the results of this type of leadership; the best test is to answer the questions: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? What is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?

Another model for ethical leaders is transformational leadership. According to Yukl (1994), transformational leaders activate what Maslow calls the higher-order needs in their followers. He adds that this transforming leadership is a process in which leaders and followers assist each other to reach greater levels of morality and motivation. Yukl states that effective

transformational leaders have a number of common attributes: 1) seeing themselves as change agents, 2) being risk takers, 3) believing in people and caring about the needs of others, 4) being able to articulate their core values, 5) being flexible and open to learning, 6) having cognitive skills and believing in disciplined thinking and analysis, and 7) being visionaries.

Bass (1985) maintains that transformational leaders can motivate those influenced to transcend self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or country. He uses Mahatma Gandhi as an example of one who was repeatedly able to convince his followers to sacrifice their own safety and security interests for the good of India. H. Gardner (1993) also discusses Gandhi as an example of a "person whose ideas and...courageous personal example directly affected the behaviors of millions of people" (p. 12) and uses a statement from Albert Einstein to clarify this vision:

> Gandhi had demonstrated that a powerful human following can be assembled not only through the cunning game of the usual political maneuvers and trickeries but through the cogent example of a morally superior conduct of life.... Generations to come, it may be, will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth. (as cited in H. Gardner, 1993, p. 353)

Furthermore, Bass (1985) asserts that the well-being of an organization is better served by moral leadership and that moral leadership helps followers see real conflicts between competing values. He adds that,

> A strong argument can be made for encouraging organizational leaders to subscribe to a code of ethics of what is right and what is wrong.... [However] the transformational leader may be a breaker and changer of what society has regarded heretofore as right and wrong. (pp. 182-184)

Covey (1990) also believes that people can be change catalysts or transformers in any situation or organization. He makes it clear, however, that because transformational leadership is principle-centered, leaders must improve their own habit patterns before they can change organizations. He adds that those who adapt well to changing environments generally have a set of changeless values, and their behaviors reflect these values. Furthermore, Covey uses words such as developer, mentor, value clarifier, and exemplar to describe transformational leaders and adds that these leaders cultivate collaborative relationships based on mutual interests (win-win). Because Covey believes that transformational leadership builds on the human need for meaning, he also uses words like purpose, values, love, morals, ethics, mission, and principles to further clarify this type of leadership. Finally, Covey says vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith are required qualities in transformational leaders.

Colby and Damon (1992), likewise, believe that people can be change agents or transformers in any situation or organization. For example, in their study *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment* Colby and Damon present people they call "moral exemplars" (p. 27) who have dedicated their lives to making the world a better place.

METHODS

Two groups of participants were included in this study: survey participants (i.e., graduate students) and interviewees or primary participants (i.e., moral leaders). The survey participants consisted of 57 students from four graduate classes in the Schools of Education and Nursing at a private Catholic university in Miami Shores, Florida. They were invited to take part in the survey with the permission of their instructors during the fall semester of 1997. The survey participants identified potential leaders for interviews using a moral leadership rating scale.

The 12 interviewees selected by the graduate students because of their moral qualities were among 39 public figures described on the survey instrument. Some of the selected public figures have written books, have had books or articles written about them, are known locally or nationally, or have received awards and recognition for their work.

The interviewees included six females and six males ranging in age from 40 to over 70. All the interviewees are White Christians—2 Protestants, and 10 Catholics. Although both African American and Jewish individuals were included in the survey portraits, and several from each group were selected by the survey participants as potential interviewees, none from either group was available to be interviewed. Regarding the 12 interviewees, the researchers acknowledge that there was a liberal bias in their selection. Furthermore, the researchers also acknowledge that the interviewees often share similar ideologies and philosophies.

Profiles of the 12 interviewees are presented to provide portraits of them, and to place their responses in the context of who they are and how they have lived their lives. All participants are public figures who agreed in advance to have their names disclosed. The interviewees are presented in alphabetical order; the information for the profiles came primarily from the vitae that the interviewees provided to the researchers. In some cases, additional information was gathered from publications and books written by or about the interviewees.

Joan Chittister, a Sister of St. Benedict, is a teacher, lecturer, and author. She is the Executive Director of Benetvision: A Research and Resource Center for Contemporary Spirituality in Erie, Pennsylvania. Her work includes activism for many peace and justice issues including the role of women in the church and society. She has a Ph.D. in speech-communication

theory from Pennsylvania State University. She has received numerous awards and honors for her work for peace and women's issues as well as nine honorary doctorates and two book awards.

Michael Crosby is a Franciscan priest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who is a peace and justice advocate, lecturer, and author of a number of books. His writing and lecture topics address Biblical spirituality for the first world society, corporate responsibility, and the use of money to promote positive social change. He has a Ph.D. in theology and has conducted retreats, workshops, and presentations in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Morris Dees is a civil rights attorney, university visiting law instructor, and author who co-founded the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in Montgomery, Alabama, to protect and advance the legal and civil rights of poor people and others of all races through litigation and education. Over the past 25 years, he and his colleagues have handled more than 50 complex federal civil rights cases, some involving appeals to the United States Supreme Court. In July 1998 in Manning, South Carolina, Dees and other attorneys for the SPLC secured the largest judgment ever awarded ($37.8 million) against a hate group, the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. He has received numerous honors and awards for his work including eight honorary degrees; he is the author of a number of books.

Shelley Douglass is a civil rights and peace activist, author, and founder and current coordinator of The Catholic Worker Mary's House in Birmingham, Alabama, a house of hospitality for homeless families. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, she was part of movements of resistance to the Vietnam War and became involved in the evolving women's movement. In 1975, she was among those arrested in the last civil disobedience action of the Vietnam War, charged with "failure to quit." In 1978, she, her husband Jim, and other friends co-founded the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, which maintains a nonviolent presence next to the Washington State Trident base at Bangor.

Pedro Jose Greer is a physician and assistant dean at the University of Miami School of Medicine. He is an advocate for the poor and founder and medical director of Camillus Health Concern, a free walk-in health care clinic for the homeless of Miami-Dade County, Florida. His concern for access to quality health care extends beyond the scope of his patient population to embrace those who are generally considered the medically underserved in society. He has worked at local and national levels to raise consciousness concerning the plight of the underserved population, has spoken extensively on the subject at numerous medical schools, and has advised the administrations of Presidents Bush and Clinton regarding health care.

Thomas Gumbleton is auxiliary bishop of Detroit, Michigan. A peace and justice activist and author, he is past president of Bread for the World and founding president of Pax Christi, USA. He has traveled to Iran, Iraq, Haiti,

Nicaragua, El Salvador, Vietnam, and Hiroshima on behalf of peace and justice issues. His work focuses on church reform as well as societal peace and justice issues including opposition to the "just war theory" and concern for "the terrible misdistribution of the world's wealth." In addition to his doctor of canon law degree that he earned in 1964, he has received six honorary doctorates and numerous awards and honors.

Marie Carol Hurley is an Adrian Dominican Sister who has been a university instructor and has worked for peace and justice issues and in community service in Miami, Florida. She has served as legislative aide to Congressman William Lehman and currently is the chairperson of the board of the Peace Education Foundation, an organization that is active in over 20,000 schools in the U.S. and in Canada, Argentina, and Jamaica.

Rosemary Radford Ruether is a Catholic feminist theologian, author, and university professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. Her lectures, writings, and courses address issues such as the interrelation of Christian theology and history to social justice issues including sexism, racism, poverty, militarism, ecology, and interfaith relations. She holds a Ph.D. in classics and patristics, has received 11 honorary doctorates, and is the author or editor of more than 32 books. She has traveled and lectured widely at universities and church conferences.

Joseph Sciortino is retired CEO of SYSCO, a large South Florida corporation. He is co-founder of the Daily Bread Food Bank and Extra Helpings/Second Harvest, which are nonprofit organizations designed to help feed the hungry of South Florida. The primary function of the Daily Bread Food Bank is to channel edible but unmarketable surplus food to those in need. Each month the Daily Bread Food Bank distributes food through its warehouses in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties to agencies that serve senior citizen centers, homes for the handicapped, day care facilities, schools, and homes for the indigent.

Kathy Thornton is a Sister of Mercy and doctor of ministry who since 1992 has served as national coordinator of the National Catholic Social Justice Lobby (NETWORK), in Washington, DC. The goal of NETWORK is to lobby and educate for social justice with a primary focus on how United States policy and legislation affect those who are poor. From its beginnings, NETWORK has worked for just legislation on a whole range of issues, but with the primary focus on how United States policy affects people who are economically poor. The Network Education Program (NEP) was established in 1975 as the educational partner of NETWORK. NEP is responsible for researching and publishing educational materials and sponsoring workshops and seminars related to social justice.

Jim Wallis is an author, preacher, pastor, and activist. He is co-founder of Sojourners community in inner-city Washington, DC, and is editor-in-chief of *Sojourners* magazine, which addresses peace and justice issues and exam-

ines the connections among faith, politics, and culture. He has written a number of books including *The Soul of Politics,* which calls for a political morality combining social justice with personal responsibility. The *New York Times* called it "a troubling book in the very best sense of the word...urgently needed," and Desmond Tutu described it as "a tremendous and timely book...just what the doctor ordered for a hardened, cynical, disheartened, and disillusioned world." He travels extensively in the United States and internationally, speaking, preaching, leading seminars and retreats, and giving interviews. He participated as an invited fellow in Harvard's Center for Values and Public Life during the academic year 1998-1999.

Miriam Therese Winter is a Medical Mission Sister who is a songwriter, author, peace and justice activist, and professor at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut. Her courses and lectures address issues such as justice, hunger, homelessness, poverty, gender, liberation, and reconciliation, and she is a fund-raiser for children with AIDS and for abused and disadvantaged children in Connecticut. She has a Ph.D. in liturgical studies from Princeton, has published more than 10 books, is particularly concerned about gender-based issues, and is an advocate nationally and internationally for an emerging feminist spirituality and for the full liberation of women.

INSTRUMENTS

Two instruments were used in this study, a survey and an open-ended interview. The survey included 39 short portraits of public figures who were selected from a variety of fields including medicine, politics, the military, religion, education, journalism, psychology, law, entertainment, and business (e.g., Jimmy Carter, Jack Kevorkian, Marian Wright Edelman, and Ann Richards). None of the public figures were identified by name. The survey also included an answer sheet on which students had to rate the public figures from *least moral and ethical* (1) to *most moral and ethical* (6). The following definition of moral leadership, adopted from Roepke (1995), was provided in the survey's instructions: "The moral leader is one who has a positive, lasting effect or influence on others and the world."

The second instrument consisted of an interview, which included 10 open-ended questions about moral leadership and was designed for the selected public figures. Among those 10 questions, the following were selected for the purposes of this study: (1) Do you consider yourself a change agent, one who changes environments in a positive way? and (2) How do you empower others to be change agents?

PROCEDURES

Procedurally there were two steps: (1) completion of the survey by graduate students; and (2) the open-ended interviews with the selected leaders. In the

first step, by means of the morality survey instrument 57 university graduate students selected the moral leaders who would be invited to participate in the interviews. The students' participation was anonymous and voluntary; however, no student from four collaborating graduate classes declined to participate. During the survey, the students were asked to rate the leaders described by the portraits on the leadership morality scale. Twenty-one public figures, chosen by 75% or more of the graduate students as being in the top one-half (4, 5, 6) of the moral continuum, were invited to participate. The second step consisted of the open-ended interviews. Recruitment letters were sent to the 21 selected figures. The letters were followed by one or more telephone calls. The researchers were unable to elicit a definite response from four of the people, and as anticipated, several of the well-known personalities declined to participate. Of the 21 potential interviewees, 12 were interviewed.

The interviews were scheduled with the participants at a time and place convenient to them. As described in the recruitment letter, all the interviews were audiotaped. In addition, during the interviews, the researchers wrote notes of interviewees' responses to later develop tentative ideas regarding categories and relationships (Maxwell, 1996). The interviews lasted from 30 to 50 minutes. The variation in length of interview time did not appear to be related to whether the interview was conducted by telephone or face-to-face. The researchers ensured that the telephone and face-to-face interviews were consistent by using the same interview questions and allowing the interviewees as much time as they wished to respond to each question. All the interviewees agreed to have their names used in the study. After the interviews were conducted, the tapes were transcribed verbatim.

DATA ANALYSIS

A phenomenological, narrative approach—the telling of people's stories—was used. Content analysis was the central technique used to identify the issues and themes that the interviewees emphasized in their responses (Berg, 1995; Maxwell, 1996). First, the transcripts of the leaders' interviews were read in their entirety; next, each verbatim response to the study question was reviewed on a line-by-line basis. Then, for the responses to the question, units of information—words, phrases, concepts—that met the following requirements were identified: They contained information that contributed to the meaning of each research question; they were phrases or words that could stand on their own as pieces of data; and they were meaningful to the extent that they could be interpreted similarly by individuals other than the researchers. Identified units of information were coded and grouped into categories based on their common content or theme. The labels for the categories were chosen based on the participants' own words (e. g., participation, encouragement, consciousness raising).

The subcategories were grouped into broader or core categories. Thematic connections and recurring patterns began to emerge from sorting the data into subcategories and categories. One of the researchers independently verified that the subcategories and core categories developed by the primary researcher accurately reflected the information conveyed by the interviewees. A Ph.D. candidate, knowledgeable about qualitative research but not familiar with the content of the study, provided intercoder reliability. Three of the 12 transcripts were randomly selected and coded by the Ph.D. candidate to establish a percentage of agreement about the subcategories and categories. The percentage of agreement between one of the researchers and the Ph.D. candidate was 77%.

RESULTS

This section is a narrative description of the interviewees' answers to the interview questions: Do you consider yourself a change agent, one who changes environments in a positive way? How do you empower others to be change agents?

In this report, each interviewee was labeled with a single title (e. g., religious leader, professor, lawyer, doctor), although most of them have participated in many disciplines. For example, even though those labeled religious leaders were individuals with religious titles—Bishop, Sister, Reverend, and Father—many of them might easily have been categorized in multiple areas such as educator, professor, writer, publisher, editor, lecturer, public speaker, activist, advocate, or others as indicated in their biographies.

All the interviewees answered "yes" to the first question, that they consider themselves to be change agents who change environments in a positive way. Greer qualified his "yes" answer:

> Am I an agent for change? Interestingly, I'm probably an agent of ancient history, more trying to maintain constants from before than to make a change. What I do in medicine as a volunteer with the poor is historical. It is nothing new; it is something very old.

Others—five religious leaders, one lawyer, and one professor—clarified their "yes" responses. For example, Ruether responded:

> Well, obviously, I do. Practically everything that I write and teach and do is related to that.... I've obviously motivated a lot of individuals because I constantly have people coming up and saying, your books are so good. But, again, how much any one of us is managing to make real historic changes decreases because the forces of the present system are so powerful.

Likewise, Gumbleton related that he absolutely works for change:

> Well, if you're committed to the task of transforming the world into something that resembles the reign of God, then you're definitely hoping for change. And if you're committed to action, then you're going to be, yes, working toward change. That's right.

Winter provided a similar response:

> Change for the sake of the full inclusion of all God's people, peace and justice for all God's people. No small matter. When I say all God's people, I mean people around the world...we must remember one step at a time, we do the best we can. If God believes us, then we let God make the difference. I think any real change comes through the Spirit. We just try to be open channels for that.

Dees and Hurley agreed that they are agents for change. Dees recounted:

> Well, I think who knows who's looking at you. And obviously, at this stage of my life I get a lot of letters from people. You know that line out of *Rhinestone Cowboy*. I get letters and cards from people I don't even know. They attribute going to law school to seeing the things I've done, reading my books and things. They ask me to write letters they can read to their little child when the child gets older.

Hurley related that she was a change agent by virtue of her teaching career:

> I was chairperson of the department before very many women were chairperson of a theater department, so I was able to effect some change of attitude in that way.... I think that I was able to choose productions or give them my vision, and that was one way of bringing about some change.... We did *Finian's Rainbow* with an emphasis on the things it says about race and about corrupt politics...so I think I have been a change agent somewhat in that way. I had the privilege of teaching at the Seminary in Boynton Beach and taught homiletics, preaching, and speech.... I was the first woman to teach up there, and that was a change for the seminarians.... I was able, I think, to change their ideas of women, nuns.... So I think in some ways that I have been able to be an agent of change.

Chittister and Crosby believe that they effect change by making their ideas public. Chittister remarked that she considers herself a thinker and presents her ideas publicly adding,

> I take the risk of being public about my ideas, and it is a risk, and sometimes a very humiliating one.... I feel my obligation is to articulate for wiser minds to process the questions that arise in my own heart, and so for me, functioning in a culture of change means, first, saying the question, second,

> suggesting some possible approaches, third, risking that rejection, and fourth, staying open myself to new ideas, trying very hard to stay open.

Crosby commented that he was the one who began to involve Catholics in the cooperative responsibility movement in the United States and was the person who started the effort to challenge tobacco companies about their investments, so he believes he has had an effect. He also revealed that, in November 1997,

> I was at Exxon headquarters in Dallas challenging them on global warming and telling them we were prepared to file a shareholders' resolution to challenge them, which I think is a moral and ethical issue. And in May 1997, I was at the annual meeting at Boeing and challenged them on the issue of human rights in China,...knowing that I was going to be going to China and didn't know what would happen when I went to China. I was quite frightened at what would happen to me personally for speaking what I thought was right and trying to be a voice. More and more, I'm seeing how I do have a responsibility as a moral person to be a voice for the ones who are afraid to speak or don't know what's going on or are unable to have a forum.

Responses to the second question about empowering others to be change agents focused on main areas or categories. These included getting others to participate and to share; encouraging others, showing confidence, and being an example; raising the consciousness and awareness of others; and helping others to discover their own power and interests.

GETTING OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE AND SHARE

Four of the interviewees, Greer, Winter, Thornton, and Crosby, discussed the importance of empowering others by getting them to share and to participate. Greer stated that it is really important to empower people, adding, "to empower people means you have to give up some power; and that is very, very important." He also commented that he does not compete against other people, just tries to do better for himself, and then he discussed the importance of working together: "only God has a monopoly on the truth, so the rest of us have to sit around and work together and try and figure out a solution to whatever problem we're in." Winter expressed a similar concept by saying that she empowers others through her teaching style, which encourages sharing:

> A large piece of my own ministry and teaching is facilitating a process whereby others will find their voices, and then the learning goes horizontally, all around. We're all students in the class, we're all learners, we're all teachers, we all have shreds of wisdom; but when we leave that class, all of us collectively have the wisdom that we have shared.

Thornton also talked of the importance of promoting collaboration:

> In order to allow other people to share what they have, I must stop and try to temper my assertiveness. I'm a firm believer in collaboration, and so I believe that to call forth what somebody else has to say, another idea, also means then letting go of my own. But I think that enables people to share and also to end up with a better product.

And Crosby added that he tries to empower others by hearing their experiences:

> What I want to do is be present to people so that the power or the spirit in them can be released, and so I don't get in the way. I try to think about, respect, and honor them for their own authentic experience which is valid, which is real for them, and to learn from them.

ENCOURAGING OTHERS, SHOWING CONFIDENCE, BEING AN EXAMPLE

Six of the interviewees—two religious leaders, one lawyer, one business executive, one coordinator for homeless families, and one professor—discussed empowering others by encouraging them, showing confidence, and being an example. For instance, Crosby said that supporting others is important and added that "if you take time to be with people and let them know they're doing a great job and you respect them, that empowers them in a sense; that validates their reality." Wallis stated that encouraging and affirming are necessary to empower others and added that he assists others

> by encouraging, affirming, mentoring, and spending time with younger people in particular, which I try to do a lot of. I spend time with different kinds of young people, like I spend a lot of time with kids from the street, young people who are former gang leaders who I think are going to be the next architects of rebuilding the neighborhoods and cities around the country, so I try to make sure I have time for them; but also young church people, women and men, people coming up in the churches, and community organizers.

Douglass, Ruether, and Sciortino empower others by encouragement and, therefore, assist their growth. For example, Douglass commented that

> to be a change agent at Mary's House means to provide the conditions for people to begin to take over their lives. That is part of the empowerment process; the other part is pushing a little bit when they go about doing it.

Ruether expressed a similar concept of promoting others: "Basically, I write, I lecture, and I teach. And in all of those, I'm interested in helping people become self-developing people in their own right. Teaching is to help people become self-learners and doers in society." Sciortino described how this concept has worked for him in a business setting:

> You hire the best people you can hire, give them the autonomy to do their thing, then let them alone, get out of their way. And give them very specific goals and objectives, but don't tell them how to run their business.

He added, "If they have any degree of creativity at all, they're going to make things happen so that they are also going to effect change."

Dees recounted that people empower others by example, and sometimes without even being aware of that happening:

> People are obviously looking at what you're doing. But probably the most striking example I know of is when I was in about the seventh grade in a little rural school with only about 100 students in all. One of the teachers there came up to me and said she just wanted to tell me something. She said, "well, you don't really realize what influence you have over people. People are watching you, and you don't think they are." She said there was a little boy in the third grade who said he wanted to grow up just like Morris Dees. I don't know; maybe I'd run the football pretty hard that day. Who knows what I had done in that little school. So you never know who's watching you and who's paying attention.

RAISING THE CONSCIOUSNESS AND AWARENESS OF OTHERS

Hurley, Crosby, and Gumbleton, all religious leaders, discussed empowering others by raising their consciousness and awareness. Hurley indicated that as a teacher she was able to change some seminarians' ideas of women and nuns. She added that in the 1960s some students were inclined to be radical, so she concentrated on "teaching them peaceful ways of change, working with them toward nonviolent change." As discussed earlier, Crosby recounted that one of his missions is to raise the awareness of the powerful through his challenges to large corporations such as Exxon on global warming and Boeing on human rights in China. Furthermore, Bishop Gumbleton indicated that consciousness raising involves both the oppressed and the oppressor:

> Empowering others has two aspects—one aspect of that is the people who are oppressed or who are poor. Working among them, the task is to raise their awareness about how wrong it is for them to feel oppressed and to awaken in them a desire to change the situation so that they will not be oppressed any longer. Teaching that part of it is that people who are

> oppressed have an obligation to overcome that oppression. They have to work to overcome that oppression because oppression dehumanizes people, and we all have the responsibility to become as fully human as we can. So, it's wrong to give in to oppression, living and working among the poor; a big part of your work is going to be to raise their awareness of how wrong it is to be exploited and to be oppressed and to help them to awaken within themselves enough courage to work for change. And, it's very difficult for people who are oppressed to stand up for their rights. You go into a workplace where there is no union and people are being exploited and try to encourage them to work together and unite to try to struggle for change; well a lot of them are really afraid, they're very fearful. Even though they know it would be better down the road, they're afraid that they may never get down the road. They're afraid something will happen if they start to struggle, and that's true. There can be severe repression. It takes courage to overcome oppression; and on the part of the oppressor, it takes a willingness to let go of some of what you have—your power to exploit, your power to control, and your excessive wealth. To give that up requires a profound conversion.

HELPING OTHERS TO DISCOVER THEIR POWER AND INTERESTS

Two religious leaders, Wallis and Chittister, believe that empowerment involves helping others to discover their own interests. For example, Wallis said that people have to find their own passion; they can't live on somebody else's passion, and so they have to find their issues, their calling. He added:

> I think I try to encourage and affirm young people to find their own calling, their vocation, their passion, what it is that is going to engage their own hearts and minds; and if you can help them find that, then you've been a good supporter.

Chittister concurred that it is important to help others to pursue their own interests. She explained how she did this as a prioress, saying she did three things:

> First, I would ask the sisters to identify their own passionate interests. Second, I asked them what gifts they had to bring to those interests, concerns, questions. Third, I tried to encourage them, enable them, and move them to pursue those interests, on the spot, at any level. Even if this only meant sending a post card, if that's what that sister could do, then I would do everything to see that she could do it. So what I'm really asking people to do is take an interest, ask questions, pursue where they are. You know, we change this world one heart at a time, and we do it on one piece of turf, our own.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Several interviewees conveyed the notion that moral leaders are change agents, risk takers, even breakers of rules or laws. They discussed the importance of taking a stand and speaking out, making their ideas public and consequently taking risks, and being voices for others. The interviewees also expressed the importance of having consistent values and behaviors. These results are in agreement with a large body of research about leadership, particularly servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), transformational leadership (Yukl, 1994), and spiritual leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1995). These leadership models advocate similar concepts such as service to followers and others; empowering others to grow; being change agents, risk takers, and even rule breakers; and having consistent values and behaviors. Further, these leadership models promote service to others, concern for the least privileged of society, leading others to higher-order needs and greater morality, and leading for community building. Consistent with the interviewees' perceptions, the leadership models indicate that empowering others to grow is important, and they include such concepts as caring for the soul, dialogue and listening, and reflection and analysis (Bolman & Deal, 1995; Briskin, 1996; Frick & Spears, 1996; Scott, 1994). Another common aspect is the recognition of the importance of being change agents, risk takers, even rule breakers. These belief systems endorse leaders who follow their consistent inner beliefs, even if others disagree, and suggest that transformational leaders may even be breakers of rules and changers of what society has heretofore regarded as right and wrong (Bass, 1985; Ramey, 1991; Yukl, 1994).

The interviewees' beliefs about change agents validate the importance of the concepts advocated in the discussed leadership models. Furthermore, the findings help to provide answers to such questions as those posed by Ciulla (1995), who maintained that there is a need for research into leadership ethics in order to help answer questions like "What sort of person should lead?" and "What are the moral responsibilities of leadership?" (p. 18). These findings are especially relevant because in the current study the perceptions are from the vantage point of identified moral leaders. Initially, the interviewees were identified by the researchers as individuals who met the definition of moral leaders used in this study. This identification of the interviewees was validated by the survey of graduate students who then selected the leaders for this study. Also, the interviewees of the current study have common characteristics such as winning awards and being social justice advocates, so they may well serve as examples of the type of moral leadership advocated by Roepke (1995), who has asserted that the most pressing need in society today is the need for moral leadership. And as Murphy and Enderle (1995) have stated, examples are instructive in any endeavor including ethical leadership, and with regard to ethical leadership, "examples may be inspirational: they may open new horizons and show what is possible, based on accomplishments

already realized" (p. 117).

Regarding examples of moral leadership, it is interesting that there are a number of parallels and some contrasts when this study is compared to the Colby and Damon (1992) study *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment*. It should be noted that the current study is part of a larger study, and this section of the discussion may in some instances refer to the larger study. For example, in both studies, the writers chose to discuss historical moral leaders as well as the current interviewees. Colby and Damon discuss Mother Theresa, Mohandas Gandhi, and Andrei Sakharov. The historical moral leaders examined in this study include Mohandas Gandhi as well as Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton, and Sojourner Truth.

Another area of comparison is the interviewees themselves. The 23 interviewees in the Colby and Damon study represent a diverse group, including people who are highly educated as well as some who have no more than a grade school education; they represent both the wealthy and the poor. However, the 12 interviewees in the current study are a less diverse group. All would be considered highly educated, although there is quite a range regarding wealth. The 23 interviewees in the Colby and Damon study represent a number of religious groups. On the other hand, all of the interviewees in the current study are Christians. It should be noted, however, that all five of those that Colby and Damon decided to discuss in full chapters are Christians.

There are interesting comparisons as well regarding the areas of service and interest indicated by the interviewees in both studies. Interviewees in both studies work in the areas of poverty, peace, civil rights, education, health care, medical ethics, and business ethics. Some areas addressed by the interviewees in the Colby and Damon study not addressed in the current study include journalism, foster care, the environment, and philanthropy. Areas of interest to the interviewees in the current study not discussed in the Colby and Damon study include gender justice issues and church justice issues.

An interesting finding was that when the interviewees were asked if they consider themselves to be change agents, or those who help to change environments in a positive way, they all responded "yes." However, one interviewee qualified his answer by saying that although he does definitely work for positive change, this is not a new concept, but rather there is a historical precedent for the medical advocacy work that he does. Seven other interviewees clarified their "yes" responses, and some of their comments were quite decisive including comments such as "practically everything that I write and teach and do is related to that," and "if you're committed to the task of transforming the world into something that resembles the reign of God, then you're definitely hoping for change," and "I do have a responsibility as a moral person to be a voice for the ones who are afraid to speak or don't know what's going on or are unable to have a forum."

When interviewees were asked how, in their opinion, they empower others to be change agents, they responded: by getting others to participate and to share; by encouraging others, showing confidence, and being an example; by raising the consciousness and awareness of others; and by helping others to discover their own power and interests. The comments about getting others to participate and to share, encouraging others, showing confidence, and being an example were expressed by interviewees from various professions including business, law, religion, medicine, and education. On the other hand, the three leaders who indicated that raising consciousness and awareness is a way to empower others were all religious leaders. Perhaps their spiritual education affected this belief as well. Interestingly, several interviewees stressed the importance of raising the consciousness of both the oppressed and the oppressors. Two other religious leaders indicated that they felt empowerment involves helping others to discover their own interests. One interviewee commented that "people have to find their own passion; they can't live on somebody else's passion, and so they have to find their issues, their callings."

CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. The most important conclusion is that interviewees' responses regarding leaders as positive change agents validate the importance of the concepts advocated in the discussed leadership models. The findings help to provide answers to such questions as those posed by Ciulla (1995), who maintained that there is a need for research into leadership ethics in order to help answer questions such as "What sort of person should lead?" and "What are the moral responsibilities of leadership?" (p. 18). Roepke (1995) has asserted that the most pressing need in society today is the need for moral leadership; therefore, these leaders may well serve as examples of the type of moral leadership advocated. Positive effects come through change, and moral leaders are change agents who are willing to take risks.

The implications and recommendations for practice regarding this study stem from several challenges and questions. One challenge is the need for leaders for positive change both in the workplace and in government, and this need is urgent because of the conflicting influences of culture and mores. Nair (1994) stated that there is a widely held view that our leaders, especially those in business and politics, have lost their moral purpose and sense of idealism, and Rost (1995) maintained that society now often thrives on materialism and individualism and renounces spirituality and the common good.

One implication of this study is that it provides some assistance regarding these challenges and questions. For example, the findings from this study provide new thinking from the perspectives of selected, identified moral leaders regarding new ideas about how leaders are change agents and how they

empower others to be as well.

Another way that this study provides some answers to questions and challenges is related to the interviewees themselves. There are commonalities among the interviewees. The interviewees were selected because they all fit the definition of moral leaders used in the study and have focused their lives on the areas of civil rights, peace advocacy, and service to the poor and voiceless. In other words, they are social justice advocates. Further, nine of the interviewees are writers who often use this forum for consciousness raising regarding social justice issues, while the others raise consciousness through teaching and speaking. Several of the interviewees have paid a price for their work, including becoming victims of bombings, receiving death threats, and serving jail sentences.

Because the interviewees share an orientation toward social justice, their remarks have corporate and group ethical leadership implications. Furthermore, the responses of the identified moral leaders dovetailed with the leadership models discussed earlier—servant leadership, transformational leadership, and spiritual leadership.

There are several recommendations for universities. One recommendation is incorporating the leaders' suggestions for empowerment of others into teaching strategies—getting others to participate and to share; encouraging others, showing confidence, and being an example; raising the consciousness and awareness of others; and helping others to discover their own power and interests. A second recommendation is to have university leaders concentrate on transformational leadership and servant leadership. In addition, consideration might be given to the recommended concept of leaders as change agents or paradigm shifters who often must take moral stands and break rules and laws if necessary.

A further area of recommendation targets the world of business. This recommendation views the role of corporations as accepting and promoting social responsibility. One way to promote this focus might be through business- and university-sponsored workshops or seminars, which would promote leadership for positive change. These workshops could place a particular emphasis on the role of CEOs as leaders who would guide the moral growth of companies and workers.

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