

Leading Beyond Current Realities and Traditional Boundaries

**Shaped by the gift of faith and sustained by a
collective spirit**

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Embracing Opportunity in a World of Uncertainty and Upheaval: Leadership Without Easy Answers

- **We are often trapped in our mindsets and paradigms but, even though it may be difficult, we can change them**
- **We need to challenge traditional mindsets and boundaries and embrace opportunities for creative renewal**
- **Embracing such opportunities requires courageous collaborative decisions based on a collective ethic of responsibility for a future of our own making**
- **What's possible now? 'Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end'. (Seneca, Roman Philosopher)**

Creatively Embracing Emergent Change

I cannot give you specific answers for your preferred futures but I will offer you:

- **insights into how you (collectively) can challenge many current leadership assumptions and mindsets**
- **strategies and processes for creative renewal and for leading beyond current realities and traditional boundaries**
- **advice on how to raise up the power of positive leadership based on a 'collective ethic of responsibility'**
- **leadership change thinking and processes which may lead to new possibilities within a generous spirit of renewal**

**YOUR JOB IS TO COLLECTIVELY NEGOTIATE AND
PASSIONATELY EMBRACE NEW AND CREATIVE
POSSIBILITIES FOR A FUTURE OF YOUR OWN MAKING**

Leading Beyond Boundaries Embracing Opportunities

Embracing opportunities consists of challenging existing assumptions and learning to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face. It requires a deep discussion of values, beliefs and behaviours and the possible transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held but unchallenged assumptions.

Challenging Traditional Paradigms of Leadership

Engaging with and embracing opportunities requires that leadership as typically conceived - a powerful, visionary person in a position of authority who can get people to follow - has to be questioned and critiqued.

The notion of the leader as 'lone ranger' is not longer appropriate, if it ever was.

Paradigms Can Imprison Our Imaginations and Creativity

(Rupert Sheldrake, 2012, *The science delusion*, London: Coronet)

A world renowned scientist, Sheldrake argues that science [Religious Orders, Church Leadership??] is being held back by 'centuries-old assumptions that have hardened into dogmas' (p. 6) and that 'dogmatic ideology, fear-based conformity and institutional inertia' inhibit creativity, restrict free inquiry and imprison . . . imaginations. (p. 4) These beliefs . . . act as barriers against open-minded thinking'. (p. 12)

Sheldrake claims that scientists usually explain away anything that does not fit and, as a result, anomalous facts accumulate until a crisis point is reached. Revolutionary changes happen when scientists adopt more inclusive frameworks of thought and practice . . . (p. 25)

Remember, Paradigm Shift Is Difficult

Successful implementation of major change often requires a radical transformation in mindsets and paradigms which may involve challenging assumptions and taken-for-granted perspectives and opinions.

'Faced with the choice between changing one's mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof'. (John Kenneth Galbraith)

Remember, it Took a Crucifixion and Martyrdom to Challenge and Change Some Entrenched Paradigms.

Challenging mindsets and paradigms takes courage.

Good examples of paradigm shift:

Vatican II - Mass in vernacular and priest facing the congregation, nuns out of habits, Church as 'People of God'

Pope Francis - new philosophy, language and symbolism in his leadership approach

Reflection for Action

What are two of the the most difficult challenges facing you in your work as a Religious?

Discuss them with those close to you at your table

Developing a Collective Ethic of Responsibility for Leadership in Religious Orders Based on Partnership with Jesus

As Religious with a vocation to serve God, others and one another, you must develop a collective and authentic ethic of responsibility for leadership.

Not to do so is unethical.

(R. J. Starratt, 2004, 2011)

Mother Teresa:

"You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together, we can do great things. This is the result of partnership in Jesus"

Offer People Space to Listen to their Own Voices

**We cannot change the world by a new plan, project or idea.
We cannot change other people by our convictions stories, advice and proposals, but we can offer a space where people are encouraged to disarm themselves, lay aside their occupations and preoccupations and listen with attention and care to their voices speaking in their own centre.**

(Henri Nouwen)

Remember, Love Conquers All.

'When love is truly responsible, it is also truly free.'

(John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope)

Love challenges us to inquire widely and appreciatively, ask bold questions and widen the circle of participation. Invite the diverse members of the Order(s) to take responsibility for what they love as an act of service and then 'explore emergent possibilities'.

(Holman pp. 79 & 170)

ASK: What would these founders do if they were here today?

Mary Ward ('a dangerous innovator')

Mary Aikenhead ('The love of Christ impels us . . .')

Mary Mckillop ('We feel our crosses hard at times but our courage should rise with them')

St John of God rose up from the gutters of Granada to create a marvelous healing ministry in the name of Jesus

THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER EXAMPLES

Challenge the Status Quo

Practice compassionate disruption to engage emergent possibilities (Holman, p. 157) or create *blessed unrest*. (Hawken, 2007)

Disrupting compassionately involves keeping your heart open and respecting those who are disrupting. (Holman, p. 163)

Listen to the 'outliers' and the '*fringe dwellers*'.

Leadership beyond means, 'Looking into the future, being creative, reading the signs of the times, adapting to new situations'.

(quote from CRA survey for this Assembly)

Stand up for what matters to you.

You can make your voice heard, even on unpopular matters, if you do it with moral purpose based on passion, compassion and respect. Choosing compassion can bring us comfort, strength, and courage. (adapted from Holman, p. 158)

Conformists rarely change the world or even themselves.

Engage and Lead with Courage and Hope

Lead with courage and hope. (quote from CRA survey)

'It's about looking to a future yet unseen; it speaks to me of facing and living the current reality and leading through the dying and grieving involved with courage and hope; it calls for lateral thinking and not being constrained by current paradigms and boundaries'.

Engage with people outside your comfort zone and remember that boundaries are human creations. Quotes from CRA Survey: 'It suggests to me the need to look "outside the square" in terms of both vision and ways of moving a group forward to help towards the fulfilment of Jesus' dream for our world'; [It involves] 'leadership beyond current realities and boundaries'; 'leadership which opens up new horizons;''leadership into a new world yet unknown to which the Gospel can speak'.

Develop Coherence in Your Vision for Change.

Vision is a driving, inspiring force not some desired future state. (Dulignan, 2012)

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

[Proverbs 29:18]

CRA survey - a number of quotes:

Leadership beyond means 'beyond daily events and administration with a focus on a vision for the future'; 'facilitating and environment of openness to the now, to possibilities as a response to charism and the invitation of the Divine'; 'It means embracing leadership that is future-orientated, that looks beyond the present moment- that is ready to adapt to the challenges of a constantly changing world'.

Don't use the Humpty Dumpty change model.

Don't try to put the pieces of the *status quo* back together, even in a new form. 'What arises from creative interactions is not a return to former times.' (Holman, p. 171)

Reflecting on what Sr Laretta, Graham and I have said so far what do you now believe 'leadership beyond . . .' means?

Take a Macroscope or Inter-connected View

Experience yourself as part of something larger - take a big picture perspective. (Holman, 2010)

We need to break through habits of separation that keep us fragmented and isolated. Search for common cause even from those we never saw as part of 'us' before. When we take the astronauts' view of earth, we see ourselves anew as a totally connected ecosystem, each of us dependent on the other for survival. We are part of an interconnected larger whole and we should act accordingly.

Microscopes help us see the infinitely small, telescopes help us see the infinitely large but macroscopes (Joel de Rosnay, *Symbiotic Man*, 2000) are tools that help us see the infinitely complex - they sense complex interconnections among information, ideas, people, and experiences. They help us see ourselves in relationship with others within a larger context and from many angles and perspectives that give us a new sense of who we really are. (Holman, p. 187)

Leading Beyond Boundaries Means Cultivating a Spirit of Wise Renewal

Cultivating a meaningful (sense-making) spirit of renewal is a core skill for our times. *'The act of sense making is discovering new terrain as you are making it.'* (Brian Arthur, Economist, Santa fe Institute)

Leading beyond 'also speaks to me of leadership that has a spiritual context – that looks beyond 'management' – that calls members forth on the journey of an ever-deepening relationship of love with God and God's people.' (quote from CRA survey)

Develop a wisdom way of knowing.

Wisdom means 'to see, to know the way' and it constitutes *'the realisation of knowledge in life giving ways - for self, others, and the world.'* (Groome, 1998, p. 288)

Holman argues that organisational wisdom 'lives in the collective' and that 'knowing how to bring together difference and stay connected is a critical skill of our times'. (p. 176)

Important Insights

The world is full of people whose notion of a satisfactory future is, in fact, a return to the idealised past. (Robertson Davies)

We cannot teach people anything; we can only help them discover it within themselves. (Galileo Galilei)

Abolish the blaming game

Don't blame people: Old-paradigm apologists blame certain people and label them 'troublemakers'. They call for more discipline, more efficiency, more standards, more controls, more loyalty, more accountability. (Breton & Largent, 1996, p. 8)

Don't blame circumstances: People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them. (G. B. Shaw)

A Wisdom-Way of Acting

- **The wisdom and gifts of creative renewal lie within the hearts, minds and souls of the people in this room**
- **Listen carefully to each other, especially with your heart, because the sources of great practical wisdom can be found in the most unexpected people and places**
- **Changes in structures, processes and procedures will be required because 'laws for the mown hay will not serve that which is growing'**. (Patrick Kavanagh)
- **However, changing structures and processes alone (e.g. forming a PJP) will not deliver creative renewal. It is people who will deliver it; listen to their voices speaking (shouting) from within**

Stick together and believe in one another.

I believe in you and all I want to do is help you to believe in you

(Amanda Marshall)

Somewhere there's a river, looking for a stream. Somewhere there's a dreamer,
looking for a dream.

Somewhere there's a drifter, trying to find his way. Somewhere someone's waiting
to hear somebody say:

"I believe in you, I can't even count the ways that I believe in you, and all I want
to do is help you to believe in you."

Somewhere someone's reaching trying to grab that ring. Somewhere there's a
silent voice learning how to sing.

Some of us can't move ahead, we're paralysed with fear. And everybody's
listening, as we all need to hear:

"I believe in you, I can't even count the ways that I believe in you, and all I want
to do is help you to believe in you."

I will hold you up. I will help you stand. I will comfort you when you need a friend.
I will be the voice that's calling:

"I believe in you and there are just so many ways that

I believe in you and all I want to do is help you to believe in you

What else can I do but believe in you."