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1st Place Essay: Leadership: Fulfilling the Purpose of Art

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Leadership: Fulfilling the Purpose of Art

By: Amanda Johnson

“Leadership is more art than science” is a bold statement. It implies that leadership does not follow a set of rules nor is it based on experimental results, but rather, it comes from the creative and skilled mind of the leader. I believe that God has ingrained creativity and potential for leadership in every human being when He created us “in His image.”

How does creativity contribute to good leadership? Creative leadership requires the ability to think outside the box. Some of the greatest leaders, like Martin Luther King, Jr., were people who did non-conventional things to obtain their goals. For instance, King encouraged the people he was leading to stand up for themselves but not through violence or anger. By encouraging the African American people to act prudently and not violently, King contributed to the Civil Rights movement’s success. Being a creative leader also requires knowing how to use your gifts and abilities to create something beautiful. Any great building project requires a leader who can imagine the end product and use the skills that he and his team possess to make that dream a reality.

Creativity that is not put to work by a skilled craftsman will only end in frustration. This is the same for leadership. Without the skills required to lead a group of people, any leader will likely fail miserably. How does one obtain those skills? Simply put, he must practice. A musician who dreams of becoming a great performer will never obtain his dream without practicing for many hours over many years’ time. In this same way, a leader must develop his craft by practicing leadership in small areas of his life before building up to greater responsibilities. He must also know what skills he possesses, those he needs to still develop, and those that he does

not have. By knowing himself and those around him, the leader may then utilize his strengths, challenge his weaknesses, and employ the skills of those under him. By putting together the skills of a leader and his followers, directed teamwork can lead to progress.

Even with a creative mind and strong leadership skills, a leader may easily fail if he is not guided by the Father Artist, God. Divine inspiration is perhaps the most important part of effective leadership. Long-term achievement based on human management is rarely seen without accountability and dependency on God. After all, it is God who gives a person the skills and creativity to lead successfully. Not only is dependency on God vital to leading, but it also opens the door for leadership to become something greater than a piece of art. Leadership can actually become a form of worship. As an artist friend of mine told me, painting is a form of worship for her, as singing can be worship for a vocalist. Likewise, I believe a great leader can worship through their leading. How wonderful would it be if the divine inspiration that gives a leader the ability to lead was turned around and offered back to God as an act of worship?

Through creativity and well-developed skills, a leader can find some success in his work, but without the divine inspiration of God, the success of his leadership will rarely be complete or long-lasting. The best leaders listen to God's leading and utilize their creativity and skills as not just art, but worship. In this way, leadership reaches beyond the scope of science and study to the eternal. It becomes something that people can look at and see the beauty of God. Is that not the purpose of art?