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Martin Luther King Jr. and Leadership: Building the Beloved Communities within the Academy

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Abstract

Leaders seek to build communities to further the work of universities, but vibrant communities embracing our differences and, at times, animosities remain elusive. However, King's (Smith & Zepp, 1974) concept of the Beloved Community provides an image about how this might be possible. While abstract, King's idea offers compelling linkages to servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and how to counter the destructive, rivalistic behaviors (Kirwan, 2005) prevalent in higher education.
King (1991) outlines three principles: 1) the sacredness of humans, 2) the need for freedom, and 3) the recognition of interdependence. Each principle is described and applied to the higher education context and then explored through the lenses of mimetic theory (Girard, 1989) and servant leadership.

"In a real sense all life is interrelated…. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967, p. 181

Few people today need much of an introduction to Martin Luther King, Jr. A towering figure of the 20th century, he has been honored in multiple ways and by multiple communities. Consequently, there is a question about why there would be a need to explore King's ideas one more time; it has already been done. And yet, the complexity and depth of King's work impels us to revisit his ideas.

One idea of King's that has been explored in other educational contexts (identifying reference) concerns his use of the term "the Beloved Community." First coined by Josiah Royce (Parker, 2014), the Beloved Community can be understood as "an integrated society wherein brotherhood would be an actuality in every aspect of life" (Smith & Zepp, 1974, p. 120). While utopian, and in many ways grandiose, the challenge of this concept is that it pushes us to consider the Other in ways that can be both uncomfortable and liberating (Kaufmann, 1970).

Of particular interest to the current exploration is how this concept can be applied to leadership in the context of higher education. Many leadership scholars have called on the need for community (e.g., Thomas & Rowland, 2014;

Wolverton & Gmlech, 2002), but anyone who has been a leader or has worked in a similar environment realizes this attribute can be difficult to attain.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore King's vision of the Beloved Community as it relates to higher education leadership. We will structure our discussion around three major sections. The first section will recast the ideas of the Beloved Community around three main elements: the sacredness of each person, the need for individual freedom, and the interdependence of all people. We will then consider threats to the Beloved Community, primarily through the lens of René Girard. We will outline the basic *theory of mimetic desire* and how it helps us understand the many challenges within a community. We will conclude with an exploration of Greenleaf's (1977) concept of servant leadership and a synthesizing section on how to mitigate some of these concerns.

The Beloved Community

Sacredness

King's (1991) first principle argues for the construction of a Beloved Community through "a recognition of the sacredness of human personality" (p. 118) - a basic need to see in each other dignity and worth. King, an ordained Baptist minister, understood this position as emerging from

a faith perspective that all people are created in the image of God: "There is no graded scale of essential worth" King observed, "no divine right of one race which differs from the divine right of another. Every human being has etched in his personality the indelible stamp of the Creator" (p. 119).

King's view was rooted in personalist theology: a "metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality" (Smith, 1981, p. 11). By asserting the moral worth and sacredness of each person, King concludes that everyone can and should be able to contribute to a community. This also leads to a corollary conclusion that no one person can hold the complete vision for what a community should be. That is, the unique aspects of each individual contribute to each community thereby creating new shared understandings. Thus, communities reflect both individual contributions as well as a collective reality.

The Establishment of Freedom

King (1991) also argued the Beloved Community arises in an environment of freedom: "A denial of freedom to an individual," King explained, "is a denial of life itself" (p. 118). This environment of freedom requires that people can evaluate their options, have opportunities to make decisions, and be willing to accept responsibility.

The need to evaluate options should be self-evident. If one is not free, then one has no options. For example, when there are laws or rules that prohibit full and equal participation, people do not have a full range of options. Additionally, it is possible that people may have a lack of awareness about what opportunities are available – not a legal or policy prohibition, but perhaps one that develops out of one's experience and background.

A second element of freedom is King's belief that this is expressed when people have the opportunity to make decisions. A free person, King would argue, assesses the options and then is able to make an independent decision. If this decision making process is disregarded or if individuals are not supported to make decisions, the result may be individuals who feel trapped or diminished in their work.

Finally, King makes the argument that one must accept the responsibility of one's decisions to be free. King understands accepting responsibility as an obligation of freedom. In an unconstrained context, therefore, each person must accept the inevitable consequences of their decision.

Recognizing the Solidarity of Human Family

The final principle in the creation of the Beloved Community is the "recognition of the solidarity of the human family" (King, 1991, p. 121). In addition to the sacredness of each person and the need for environments of freedom, King stressed the essential unity of all people. Although there will always be differences in communities, the similarities between us need to be acknowledged. Inherent in this is a recognition that individuals are interrelated. That is, what one does has an impact on others.

These three principles of the Beloved Community are interrelated themselves: the sacredness of each individual demands freedom and our interconnectedness as humans demands each of us to accept responsibility for our decisions.

As we look at the principles needed for the establishment of the Beloved Community, the obvious question is, "Why is it so difficult to create?" While there are certainly multiple reasons for this, René Girard and mimetic theory provides a powerful lens for considering why human nature finds the Beloved Community such an elusive goal.

René Girard & Mimetic Theory

While Girard is not nearly as well-known as Martin Luther King, Jr. among the general population, he is widely known among historians, literary critics, theologians, and anthropological philosophers. Girard believed that *desire is mimetic* (i.e., our desires are developed by imitating others). A corollary to that is that conflict originates in this mimetic desire. Girard explored the implications of these ideas in almost 30 books and his followers have expanded that body of work significantly (see e.g., Alison, 2013; Palaver, 2013; Tomelleri, 2015). We will position the three principles of the Beloved Community with Girard's ideas to explore some of the difficulties in establishing such a community.

As mentioned above, the first principle, the sacredness of the individual, is deeply rooted in King's religious belief. For him, the root of human sacredness is captured in the phrase: *imago dei*. While all people carry God's image, as individuals we express it in unique ways. Now while it is true that this diversity of expression allows us to learn from each other (identifying reference), it also provokes a mimetic desire that can create competitive and often destructive behavior.

For as Girard argued, our desires result from observing what others desire. That is, the desire for an object

is prompted by a model who also desires that object. Consider the classic example of two children playing side-by-side. As one child picks up a ball, it is not uncommon for the other child to suddenly show a desire to obtain it. Thus, there is competition for the object of desire between individuals. The object of desire can take almost any form. One easy dichotomy is between the concrete and the metaphysical. Concrete objects are tangible, "real" things. In a professional setting they could take the form of a better office, a higher salary, a particular computer, access to printing facilities, or just about any other item. This type of mimesis is called acquisitive mimesis (Girard, 1979). Metaphysical mimesis, on the other hand, focuses on objects of desire that are not tangible and are typically related to prestige or standing of some kind (Girard, 1979). In academe, this could be employment status (faculty v staff), rank (instructor, assistant, associate, and professor), tenure, honors, etc.

When an object of desire is limited (e.g., there is only one office with windows), competition can arise between individuals and lead to rivalistic behaviors; behaviors that may ultimately become destructive to a community. When colleagues become rivalistic, their sacred nature may become masked. Rather than allowing the unique contributions of each other to fully develop, we end up in a kind of unrealized space. For as Tomelleri (2015) has suggested, most of us have a deep sense of inadequacy or incompleteness as people. The result is that people are "constantly seeking to fill, by mirroring himself in the other, an emptiness that nonetheless remains" (pp. 81-82). Consequently, through this mirroring process, we end up more similar to each other, which only increases the frustration and envy within the community.

This potentially destructive cycle is also dangerous because it can be contagious. When two people desire the same object, there will soon be a third, then a fourth (much like what happens at a mall on Black Friday). The process quickly snowballs and this may result in broad competition for the object and less and less regard for each other (Kirwan, 2005).

Girard's analysis also helps us to consider threats to King's second principle of the Beloved Community, the establishment of freedom. Obviously, administrators work in a community that is dedicated to a particular task or mission which provides some inherent restrictions to one's freedom. For example, within a school of education, faculty members work to develop high-quality educators within a framework that is highly regulated by state and national policy. However, even with these constraining boundaries of a community's mission, there remains room for individual freedom. For what is typical of a higher education environment is that faculty members have tremendous latitude to pursue their own passions and particular interests. However, those pursuits can get in the way of freedom when the means to obtaining them constricts someone else's choices. As Kirwan (2005) writes, "Human individuals and communities are so convinced that they operate autonomously, and are so protective of this autonomy, that they are unaware of the violent measures to which they resort to maintain it" (p. 68). This is exacerbated when a community recognizes an insufficient supply of resources and, thus, one must fight for their particular share. This situation can lead to direct competition and create conflicts over both concrete and metaphysical objects (Kirwan, 2005).

The third aspect of freedom in King's view of the Beloved Community is the ability to accept the consequences of one's choice. For King, these consequences were often related to nonviolent civil disobedience in the struggle for equal rights. For academic administrators, the consequences of its members' choices are not as severe – although there can still be repercussions regarding one's job and responsibilities. A primary issue from a Girardian perspective is how the "social and economic disparities combines with the ideological and cultural tendency toward equality in desires" (Tomelleri, 2015, p. 104). Quite simply, this means that many people in a community feel trapped in the decision-making process – they do not feel the same extent of personal agency and, therefore, deflect their responsibility for what might be occurring. As a result, people will often try to shift the blame away from their personal actions onto others through what Girard (1989) called a scapegoating mechanism.

Scapegoating may start with a focus on an object (e.g., desire for higher salaries) and, as mimetic desire rises, transcend to a metaphysical state (e.g., desire for academic recognition). This can now become a community problem and people seek a *scapegoat* – the alleged cause of the crisis (e.g., the dean or the provost who may have the power to grant these desires). While this may have multiple effects, some of which we will address later, one of the primary issues here is how it impacts personal responsibility.

This brings us to the third principle of the Beloved Community: the recognition of the solidarity of human family. King based this idea on the similarities between individuals. He posited that while there are differences within groups of people, acknowledging the similarities will help build increased levels of unity within a community.

However, a Giradian analysis of the idea of human interconnectedness raises concerns. Emphasizing similarities

among all members of a community opens the door to dangerous rivalries. This could occur because individuals might be encouraged to desire the same thing. In the context of King's writings, there should always be a sufficient supply of freedom and dignity to be offered. Thus, as long as others are willing to attribute freedom and dignity to all, mimetic desire would not accelerate to a crisis. However, especially when the object of desire is limited, this is not always possible and mimetic desire may turn people against each other. When this occurs there is significant potential for dangerous rivalries and conflict to erupt leading to the destruction of the community's unity.

At this point, the scapegoating mechanism emerges again. As part of the mimetic cycle, a scapegoat is needed to assuage the angst and pain of a community and relieve the violence that is built up. This can create a sentiment of common feeling and may end up expelling (or, perhaps with tenure involved, exiling) an individual from the community.

While all of these are mimetic threats to the establishment of a Beloved Community, we would argue that effective leadership could mitigate many of these tensions. Specifically, we advocate for Greenleaf's (1977) approach known as servant leadership.

Servant Leadership and the Beloved Community

As we all intuitively know, leaders cannot create community by fiat. While we can discuss structural and policy issues that may contribute to establishing community, we need to begin by exploring who we fundamentally are as people in leadership roles. The only control we ultimately have is over our own actions. This approach, starting with introspection, is central to the model of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977).

A question that all leaders should answer is why they are drawn to a leadership position. While the answers to this question will obviously vary, how people answer it helps to define the kind of leader that person may become. For example, if a leader is driven primarily by ego demands, it would logically follow that his/her leadership style would necessitate a certain amount of personal recognition. Or if a leader is primarily motivated by financial gain, then it would logically follow that decisions would be based on how to best maximize this. Of course, as Greenleaf (1977) acknowledges, all leaders have multiple motivators, but it is an important question to acknowledge.

From a servant leadership perspective, Greenleaf (1977) asserts that a "servant-leader is servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (p. 27). However, to understand this position, it is critical to understand what it means to be a servant and the behaviors that support this orientation. Van Dierendonck (2011) specifies six characteristics of the servant leader: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. Each of these will be considered in turn.

1. Empowering and developing people: For a servant leader, the core of the work is to foster a sense of personal well-being within a community and give one's followers "a sense of personal power" (Van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1233). When a community feels empowered in doing the work, there is greater likelihood that the work will be accomplished. In many ways, this can be connected back to some of the seminal work done in psychology on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), locus of control (Weiner, 2012), and mind-sets (Dweck, 2006). At the risk of gross over simplification, these ideas can be captured by suggesting that when people feel better about themselves and their ability to complete the work, their productivity and success will rise.

2. Humility: We often have a false perception that humility is some kind of weak and overly pious sentiment. However, as Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) state, "Humility is not about having a low view of one's self or one's self-worth, but it means viewing oneself as no better or worse than others do" (p. 124). By remaining humble, servant leaders communicate to the community that the organization is not some rigid hierarchy, but instead relies on the strengths of all.

3. Authenticity: Leaders who are authentic clearly limit the pretense or hypocrisy of their actions. Obviously, all of us are flawed in multiple ways, but servant leaders "build integrity by practicing virtues and acting on shared values" (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010, p. 318). Additionally, as Dierendonck (2011) suggests, the authenticity of a servant leader emerges out of consistency, visibility, honesty, and vulnerability.

4. Interpersonal Acceptance: A challenge for all leaders in an organization is how to accept those members of the community who tend to be shunned for various reasons. While never easy, servant leadership suggests that acceptance emerges out of empathy with others. Greenleaf (1977) states, "Empathy is the imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being" (p. 33). When we are able to

empathize with others, we have a greater ability to accept them regardless of their relative positions. This in turn provides the members of the community with a deeper sense of belonging and safety.

5. <u>Providing Direction</u>: While providing direction would be characteristic of any leadership model, in servant leadership it is much more dynamic as it responds to the community. This reflects an understanding that all communities are constructed; in other words, they emerge out of particular strengths, weaknesses, and context. So while it remains critical to provide a clear focus for the work, in the servant leadership model this will always be dependent on what specific resources the community has and can access.

6. <u>Stewardship</u>: All people are stewards in different ways: we steward our money, our gifts, our opportunities. For leaders, they are tasked with being stewards of a community for a certain period of time. Consequently, a servant leader must think about his/her role as one who is considering the larger context and is working to leave the organization in a better place than when s/he started. As Greenleaf (1977) stated about servant leadership and impact, "The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society?" (p. 27).

The previous six characteristics of servant leadership can be aligned with how we might imagine creating King's Beloved Community within the academy (see Table 1).

Table 1
Attributes of the Beloved Community Related to Greenleaf's Servant Leader

Attributes of Beloved Community	Attributes of Servant Leader
Sacredness of the human personality	Acceptance by the leader Authenticity of the leader
Freedom to choose	Empowering and developing others Providing direction
Solidarity of human family	Stewardship Humility

For each of the above categories, we will now synthesize how they intersect and how to strategize in the building of deeper communities.

Synthesis

Sacredness, Servant Leadership, and Mimetic Theory

There is perhaps no more challenging task for a leader than to accept all members of one's community. While there is no question about whether some people are more difficult to accept than others, King challenges us to think about how everyone is sacred – without exception. In similar ways, servant leadership argues for the same; when leaders accept people for who they are, we are essentially declaring that person's worth. A corollary to this is that leaders must be authentic. When we are true to our own gifts and graces, we affirm our own sacredness to the community as a leader: leading by who you are rather than as some archetype of what you think a leader should be.

The challenge to both of these premises within higher education emerges out of the nature of the work and context. First, academics are trained over many years to not only become knowledgeable about their respective fields, but to become experts. When a person spends an entire academic career understanding the constructs and nuances of one field, the result can be a certain inflexibility and arrogance towards other viewpoints. Consequently, academics may well understand their own sacredness, but not always appreciate the unique and important contributions that others may have. From a leadership perspective, this can become a difficult challenge in bringing people together for common purposes. This is well illustrated by the philosophical differences in approach to a subject that can divide academic units.

Furthermore, as noted previously, this emphasis on the individual can give rise to deeply competitive and often destructive behaviors. One strategy to minimize competition for tangible objects is simply to provide broader access to them. To the extent possible and given the constraints of any given situation, it behooves the administrator to provide employees with resources. Of course, this is not entirely possible, but providing as much access as possible can help in defusing at least some acquisitive mimesis.

Ironically, one strategy to eliminate mimetic competition at a metaphysical level is to emphasize differences between members of the community. When the differences between two people are perceived as significant, they are externally mediated and mimetic competition is minimized. For example, a faculty member who has a primary responsibility to an undergraduate program will not be in direct competition with faculty members primarily working with graduate students. While role differentiation will not remove all of the competing objects (e.g., faculty

status, perceptions of leadership, etc.), it does lower the potential for destructive mimetic competition that a more egalitarian stance might provoke.

As suggested earlier, mimetic competition forms the root of both physical and emotional violence in society (Girard, 1979). In reality, the Other and not the object arouse our desires, thus the mimetic conflict can deteriorate into a general antagonism towards each other. When this antagonism grows, there is a need for release through the identification of a scapegoat. The scapegoat mechanism can reduce the tension and violence, but does so at the cost of each other's sacredness. What is critical for administrators confronting this situation is two-fold. First, the servant leader needs to enter into a relationship with the person being scapegoated. In doing so, the leader will better "understand the abilities, needs, desires, goals, and potential of those individuals" (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015, p. 119). As a leader is able to do this, it then becomes important to communicate and highlight to the community the central and sacred role that each person—including the scapegoat—has. This is not to suggest that people should never leave a community, only that the leader's job is to clearly communicate that everyone should be valued. As Greenleaf (1977) stated, "People grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing" (p. 35).

Freedom, Servant Leadership, and Mimetic Theory

In considering the freedom of an academic environment, servant leaders should be focused on the growth and development of the people within the community: "The question of whether the people in an organization are learning, growing, and developing as leaders is critical to the establishment of whether the organization has servant leadership" (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010, p. 330). To achieve this, servant leaders recognize that each person has something unique to give as a result of their specific gifts and creativity – with no exceptions. This approach helps establish an ethos of freedom as people are empowered to pursue their own development.

Furthermore, since servant leadership has a strong emphasis on understanding the provision of direction as constructed together, members of the community may be able to recognize their personal contribution to the vision of the group. This is not to say that servant leaders forgo a responsibility to provide direction, instead it suggests that leadership consists of imagining and anticipating what direction(s) can be pursued. As Greenleaf (1977) stated:

> As long as one is leading, one always has a goal. It may be a goal arrived at by group consensus, or the leader, acting on inspiration, may simply have said, "Let's go this way." But the leader always knows what it is and can articulate it for any who are unsure. By clearly stating and re-stating the goal the leader gives certainty to others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves. (p. 29)

In higher education, traditionally an emphasis on freedom would not be a major concern – faculty members have significant autonomy in that they can weigh alternatives related to the content of their courses, the direction of their research, and how they provide service to the university and community. However, there are two areas of friction. First, higher education is becoming more codified—especially in professional schools. Standards are being established, outcomes are being measured, and the level of overall accountability is much greater. From a faculty member's perspective, this may certainly be interpreted as a threat to their "academic freedom" (i.e., a constriction of the alternatives open to them). The result is that there can be a rejection of the common goals and purposes of the community.

Second, there have always been discrepancies between the freedom that faculty enjoy and what the support staff experience; staff members may have much more narrowly defined roles and responsibilities. For example, it is typical on a university campus to find a significant number of faculty members absent on a late Friday afternoon, while the majority of the staff are still required to be there. There are reasons for this, of course, but we cannot ignore the fact that differences like this can have a deleterious effect on how the two groups view each other.

So even though there is already a great amount of freedom in an academic environment, effective leadership will still need to pay attention to this attribute of the Beloved Community. Since freedom necessitates the weighing of alternatives and making decisions, administrators should expand the flow of information and possibilities. To assist community members in making suitable choices, the administrator must share, as much as possible, information that will inform the decision and provide direction. Mimetic analysis would suggest that this is not a difficult task. The different roles between the administrator and the faculty/staff of a unit serve to minimize mimetic competition. Furthermore, the administrator has the information and, as long as it is freely shared, it will not become an object of desire in and of itself.

This is why sharing information to allow an informed choice is so critical. By empowering and developing members of the community within the context of the university's mission, a servant leader can facilitate the establishment of freedom within the community. Of course, there are some circumstances when sharing all information is not possible, and other situations when sharing all information is unethical. However, to the extent possible, an open sharing of relevant information will serve the community by maximizing the freedom of choices and minimizing destructive competitive mimesis.

However, freedom to choose in and of itself will not necessarily remove rivalistic behavior within the community. As noted, mimetic desire can be destructive when it becomes competitive. Destructive competition can be reduced in a number of ways. As mentioned earlier, avoiding a scarcity of the objects of desire is an obvious way to avoid acquisitive mimesis. If there is plenty of everything to go around, competition will be reduced. Although given the state of higher education economics, this land of plenty ideal will probably be fleeting at best. Consequently, there is a need to also consider the competition that emerges around status, position, recognitions, etc.

Metaphysical objects are inherently less restricted than concrete resources and can be made more generally available to a community. With regard to promotion, prestige, and other preferment, making them equally available and providing mentoring is one way to reduce rivalistic behavior. If the rules for obtaining such preferment promote the task/mission of the community and can be shown to advance the personal goals of an individual, then the destructive aspects of mimetic desire can be minimized and the positive aspects of imitation will emerge.

Solidarity, Servant Leadership, and Mimetic Theory

Leaders who adopt a servant leadership perspective are often caught in difficult roles. On the one hand, the leader is placed within a certain hierarchical structure that elevates one's standing. On the other hand, a "servant leader is more inclined to serve than to be served, recognize rather than to be recognized, and empower rather than to flex position power by commanding and controlling the response of followers" (Ebener & O'Connell, 2010, p. 332). Consequently, a servant leader recognizes the role of stewardship: the work of being a leader is much bigger than him/herself. A servant leader recognizes that success is connected to the work of the community. While there can certainly be brilliant insights and program developments,

a servant leader understands that an individual can never outperform the strength of the group. The only way that a servant leader is able to appreciate this is by understanding that we succeed and fail collectively.

One of the ways that this solidarity can be threatened in higher education is when we misunderstand and/or misperceive what other members of the community do. For anyone who has been in higher education for any length of time, it is quite easy to identify individuals who become scapegoated by the community. What typically happens here is that someone gets identified and blamed for the shortcomings of the community (Tomelleri, 2015). Consequently, others within the community are able to dismiss their own culpability and avoid responsibility. The result of this can be that the solidarity of the community is compromised as people fail to recognize King's (1967) counsel: "Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly" (p. 181).

However, what should a leader do if scapegoating occurs despite one's best efforts? Girard suggests the need to recognize our inherent dependence on each other. However, as noted previously, we have a deep desire to guard our autonomy and independence (Kirwan, 2005). Within higher education, this issue can be acute. By failing to see our interconnectedness as faculty, staff, and administration, we develop inflated perceptions of ourselves and the roles we have. Obviously, recognizing this is difficult for an entire community and requires tremendous self-awareness. However it is quite reasonable for an administrator to lead in this non-mimetic fashion. As Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) write, "Humble leaders catalyze learning and growing by exemplifying a learning attitude, by being open about their mistakes and limitations and by actively encouraging others' strengths. This led to an increased feeling of personal freedom and engagement among followers. Humility and servant leadership are inexplicably linked" (p. 124). Ironically, non-mimetic leadership can become the object of a positive mimetic desire: members can see it and imitate it, thereby restoring a sense of solidarity within the community.

Towards a Beloved Community

As academic leaders working to establish healthy communities, King, Girard, and Greenleaf all provide important insights. By combining non-mimetic behavior with the principles of servant leadership, leaders can provide a way forward in the establishment of a Beloved Community. By making their own non-mimetic behavior explicit, the servant leader can hold it out as an object of desire and, in turn, provide a new direction for the community.

However, as difficult as it may be, simply laying down destructive mimesis is not enough to establish it as an object of metaphysical mimesis; to create non-mimetic behavior as a mimetic desire requires the leader to actively model that behavior. For the leader can reject destructive mimesis through seeking out the successes of others and publicly praising them, which embodies servant leadership. As Ebener and O'Connell (2010) wrote and stated earlier "The servant leader is more inclined to serve than be served, recognize than be recognized, and empower rather than to flex positional power by commanding and controlling the response of followers" (p. 332).

Finally, Greenleaf (1977) challenges us as leaders when he states, "There must be some order because we know for certain that the great majority of people will choose some kind of order over chaos even if it is delivered by a brutal non-servant and even if, in the process, they lose much of their freedom… The big question is: What kind of order? This is the great challenge to the emerging generation of leaders: Can they build better order?" (p. 59). The order of a Beloved Community, informed by servant leadership, might just be a better option.

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