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Extemporaneous Idea Formulation: Innovating Beyond Vision

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Globalization has taken traditional organizational leadership theory and altered it in an attempt to accommodate the changing business environment. Competitive advantages typically found in traditional sources are depleting on the basis of enhanced organizational knowledge. Creativity and innovation are the primary suppliers of this trend, developing cause for consistent organizational transformation. For this purpose, organizations are now relying on creativity and innovation as their competitive advantage, requiring greater leadership for applying these new ideas. This essay addresses creativity and innovation, applying a sacred texture analysis of the Book of Jude. To follow, a social, cultural, and psychological textural lens is applied in order to further interpret how creativity and innovation impacted the prosperity of Christianity. Finally, this essay juxtaposes Scripture with contemporary leadership challenges pertaining to creativity and innovation focusing specifically on vision, communication, and empowerment. Findings indicate an importance placed on maintaining 'true intent' despite the overwhelming urge for extemporaneous strategy formulation beyond shared organizational vision.

Effective leadership, from a situational perspective, is conducted in response to environmental conditions. Considering this perspective, the current organizational outlook factors on globalization, technology, and liberalization as virtual unknowns when it comes to forecasting the ever changing organizational environment. According to Venkaiah and Drucker (2013), traditional means for competitive advantages are shifting toward adopting a new economic approach for organizations. In particular, dynamic industries, or those characterized by rapid growth (Milberg & Gray, 2013), have altered the perception of change and inculcated transformation as a continuous response to shifting environmental conditions.

Scripture offers a comparable outlook that considers a transformational response to adaptation and growth. A confluence of perception exists when considering leadership exemplified within Scripture and necessary leadership during the 21st century. Biblically-based leaders, like that of contemporary leaders, were forced into the unknown when adopting various methods for identification within an environment of unpredictability. It was transformation and adaptation depicted throughout Scripture which provided sustainability for Christianity, thus overcoming the negative implications brought about by creative and innovative change. From a contemporary leadership position, negative implications stemming from an ever changing organizational environment include knowledge management processes, strategic, information technology, resources and relationships, and crises management (Venkaiah & Drucker, 2013, pp. 10-11) to name a few. Further, Venkaiah and Drucker (2013) suggested that organizations, as their only means for survival, become adaptive to emerging conditions through transformational processes

(p. 5). Therefore, transformation was and is necessary in order to circumvent a shifting environment.

Enormous pressures on 21st century leadership originate from the aforementioned challenges primarily as subsets of both creativity and innovation. In this sense, creativity and innovation can be viewed as negative occurrences challenging the status quo. This essay serves as a reference for juxtaposing Scriptural leadership and 21st century leadership challenges through an analysis of the Book of Jude. Findings indicate that positive perceptions of creativity and innovation were a mark of self-fulfilling agency from false teachers who took away from God's true intent by describing apostolic teachings as "outdated" or "uniformed" (DeSilva, 2004, p. 875). This essay first considers the Book of Jude as its primary Biblical reference for describing various points of contention. Socio-rhetorical criticism, specifically sacred texture analysis that considers social, cultural, and psychological textural lenses help further describe the historic setting. Finally, three transformational principles form around vision, communication, and empowerment pertaining to organizational creativity and innovation challenges in the 21st century.

Sacred Texture Analysis

Socio-rhetorical criticism offers a textual analysis for multi-layer assessments (Poon, 2006). According to Robbins (1996) socio-rhetorical criticism is a tool to assist with analyzing various sources by placing them in dialogue. In addition, socio-rhetorical criticism seats the reader in a position of interactivity through text exploration. Within the primary field of socio-rhetorical criticism are five subsets: (a) inner texture analysis; (b) intertexture analysis; (c) social and cultural analysis; (d) ideological texture analysis; and (e) sacred texture analysis. The latter, according to Winston, Bekker, and Phil (n.d.), provides an examination of how God is viewed in various instances within the text. In order to further aid the exploration of creativity and innovation in leading early Christian communities, this essay will take a deeper look into the Book of Jude, specifically ferreting out social, cultural, and psychological aspects applying textural lenses.

The Book of Jude

Jude, brother to James, half-brother to Jesus, is commonly viewed as a leader in Jewish Christianity. The Book of Jude was chosen for this essay because the author was engaged with a great diversity of traditions similar to that of contemporary culturally diverse organizational leaders. Jude's primary interest was addressing teachings inconsistent with revelations from the apostolic gospel (DeSilva, 2004). From his perspective, Jude believed select teachers were applying creativity and innovation in order to give false authority and legitimation for their own enrichment and enjoyment. Jude interpreted this falsification as cause for judgment when accusing these teachers of manipulating the Godly gift of grace through immorality (v. 4).

The Book of Jude depicts fictional teachers as destroyers of self for selfish purpose (v. 16) and leaders of fruitless lives (v. 12). Knowing that God had historically punished for worse (sinners, unbelievers, Israelites, angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.), Jude expresses fear of judgment for these sinners as a warning (Carson, Moo, Morris, 1992, p. 459). Jude's strategy was to

communicate with followers of these false teachers, gaining their trust and favor. Then, while referencing historic Biblical accounts, Jude challenges the character of these false teachers (vs. 17-18).

Social Texture Lens

From a social perspective, Jude's challenge of the false teachers' character was an attack on their honor. According to DeSilva (2004), honor during that period was a classifier for constituting placement in the hierarchical society. Therefore, Jude applied character judgment on those seeking false refuge within the upper echelon of society built upon the importance of significance to others. Within this society, reputation could be lost through accurate judgment providing a great consequence to those accused and deemed guilty.

Cultural Texture Lens

DeSilva (2004) speaks of the cultural lens as a dichotomy of purity and pollution. In other words, members of a culture view certain actions and values as pure and others as caustic. Within the New Testament texts, inherent values were founded on rejection of societal majority, toward faithful and obedient followers of Christ. Individuals following Christ and this minority depiction were forewarned by God's commandment of Aaron (Lev 10:10) not to be a conformist of separatist society; rather discern between 'holy and common'. Within this minority following was a hierarchy starting at the top with the high priest, followed by priests, Levites, and those with access to Christ. According to DeSilva, individuals found within this society, beyond what was deemed common, held a responsibility of cleanliness and holiness. However, as Jude aptly exposed, those attempting to advance within this hierarchy by claiming false access to Christ were actually perceived as devilish in their actions (v. 11).

Psychological Texture Lens

Finally, considering these social and cultural norms, Jude was able to gain favor of the false teacher audiences and raised questions as to their credibility of character. Knowing honor and shame were critical components to status, Jude's psychological approach was to expose those innovators of fictitious accounts under selfish intent for the purpose of dishonoring them within their communities. Despite the social hierarchy formed by conditions of character, those visibly deemed dishonorable, from a social and cultural context, were historically excluded from future patronage (Heb 6:4-8; 10:26-31). Therefore, Jude's attempt at gaining favor by his audiences served to reverse selfish benefits received by false teachers, thus holding them accountable for these unfaithful actions.

Juxtaposing Scripture with Contemporary Leadership

This analysis of the Book of Jude provides an historic account of creativity and innovation as it relates to survival during an ever-changing environment. Specifically, the Book of Jude challenges the notion that everything calling itself Christian is good, and followers of Christ should abandon

discernment for tolerance. Despite the attempt by false teachers to alter God's word, Jude teaches that Scripture is continually significant. From this context of continued Scriptural significance, within the depiction of creativity and innovation from Jude, comes three transformational principles for 21st century organizational leadership vision, communication, and empowerment.

Vision

As previously noted, prophets exposed in the writings of Jude were emerging through the claims of divine revelations beyond the apostolic teachings. The intent of these false teachers was to make Scripture more relevant to the times while enhancing their image in the process. However, Jude's response was to expose these individuals for their wrongdoing, illustrating the importance of staying true to God's vision (Maxwell, 2003). Therefore, from a spiritual context, the Book of Jude teaches that Christians need to keep with God's vision despite innovation and creativity. From a contemporary standpoint, one could translate this teaching as maintaining vision or reasoning behind an organizational venture at all times while finding new uses within that vision through creativity and innovation, thus enhancing that vision. This assertion brings us to the first posed principle addressing the challenge of leadership today:

Principle #1: Leaders of burgeoning organizations in dynamic industries require illustrations of vision complemented by creativity and innovation in order to successfully transform their continuously changing environment.

Communication

Jude's message was one of communication, addressing prayer (v. 20), compassion for doubters (v. 22), and avoidance of sin (v. 23) (Maxwell, 2003). The reader finds that Jude presents the importance of community, judging creators and innovators attempting to move away from God's vision in His teachings. The message is not to excommunicate these individuals; rather, to have mercy and bring these individuals back in alignment (vs. 22-23). Similarly, 21st century leaders need to communicate organizational direction to keep followers aligned with progress (Venkaiah & Drucker, 2013). Specifically, Venkaiah and Drucker (2013) suggested that efficiency and commitment come from people who relate to, align with the values of, and assimilate into the organizational culture. This brings us to our second principle:

Principle #2: Leaders of burgeoning organizations in dynamic industries require communication in order to align innovative and creative individuals and ideas with organizational interests in order to successfully transform their continuously changing environment.

Empowerment

Jude's message consistently pleads with his audience to return to a lifestyle pleasing to God (vs. 20-21). For example, Jude applies the word "ungodly" in multiple circumstances, laying the foundation for expressing judgment and establishing the requirement for both positive and

negative reinforcements (Maxwell, 2003). Essentially, through socio-rhetorical criticism, we find that Jude is empowering the reader to determine for themselves, right from wrong. From a 21st century perspective, leadership must be viewed as a collective effort due to the complexities of a global economy and the constant creative and innovative avenues. Gibert and Fairholm (1994) mentioned that “leadership is an interactive function of a leader and several followers jointly engaged” (p. 8). Venkaiah and Drucker (2013) suggested that this collective effort is a factor of followers and leaders being united under shared-terms and organizational goals. Therefore, the third and final principle here proposes:

Principle #3: Leaders of burgeoning organizations in dynamic industries require a collective effort on the part of the organization in order to successfully transform with their continuously changing environment.

Conclusion

Jude’s negative perception of creativity and innovation within the text was not a dismissal of the importance of creativity and innovation; rather a message promoting aligned creativity and innovation. Teachers promoting fictional accounts for selfish purposes were not aligned with God’s true intent. Therefore, Jude offered necessary leadership by guiding followers back to His truth. His message was one of consequence for those straying from this true path, requesting that creativity and innovation not be separated from intent. Consequence for falling out of alignment was continued Divine judgment despite the notion of grace (vs. 14-15), which Jude expressed as a gift to be respected, not a license for impunity.

Leaders of contemporary organizations in this global economic environment are charged with anticipating, envisioning, maintaining flexibility, thinking strategically, and acting as change agents (Christensen, 1997). Strategic leadership methods, such as the principles relating to vision, communication, and empowerment, become of critical importance in order to achieve desired outcomes. Further, the competitive environment continues to advance, requiring constant creativity and innovation for dynamic organizations to maintain their competitive advantage. Despite the need for leaders to evolve and remain flexible (Mullins & Komisar, 2009), focus should be placed on true intent, thus avoiding the threat of extemporaneous idea formulation and the execution of strategic decisions beyond that of organizational vision and purpose.

About the Author

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