Transforming Self-Concept for Leadership Development

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Professor

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Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Weekend Residency: Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited

sources) during the week of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage

with other students during the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.

b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade

assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

The concept of a smile as a ministry reflects the fundamental characteristics of van Karam and highlights the principles of Formation Science (van Kaam, 2017). Father Kaam remained steadfast in his theological perspective on Formation Science amid the hardships of the Hunger Winter of 1940s (Letterman & Motto, 2017). The Winter suffrage catalyzed his exploration of joy and purpose in the face of adversity, known as Formation spirituality (Letterman & Motto). According to Motto (2013), individuals are encouraged to cultivate personal growth to effectively contribute to ministerial endeavors, recognizing that inner development is crucial for outward service.

Formation Science suggests that believers in God should wholeheartedly embrace their designated purpose and heed the counsel of the Holy Spirit. This research explored a facet of Catholicism in conjunction with what van Kaam called “reverse essence” in existentialism. (van Kaam, 2011, p. 529). Challenging the essence of formation science (More, 2016, p.3) argues, “existence precedes essence, it is only natural that the man be held responsible for what he is.” However, Formation Science posits that each individual possesses an immutable essence from birth until the end of their existence (Kaam, 2011. P. 524), exemplified by Adrian's unwavering "Adrianness" in the face of mortality. The biblical verse 2 Corinthians 5:7 refers to transforming our inner being into a state that resembles God.

Supporting the notion of Formative Science, Willard (2004) explores the engagement of spiritual practices such as prayer, fasting, solitude, and meditation that lead to personal transformation, nurturing qualities akin to Christ, and fostering growth in Christian leadership. However, Van Dongen (2023) asserts the transformative impact of spiritual disciplines in the life of many Christians to emulate Christ's character underachieved. Yet, Jesus' spiritual life is a testament to authentic spirituality, prioritizing its significance over ascetic practices (Willard, 2004). According to Van Dongen (2023), the development of leadership qualities occurs when individuals adopt a Christ-centered approach. As the eternal teacher of Truth, Christ liberates and inspires profound personal change in the hearts and lives of those who follow Him.

The research further examined Formation Science as the significant impact of an individual's formative years on the Christian journey. Van Kaam (2017) discusses the development of a formation process experienced alongside Rinus- his childhood friend, deepening their awareness of Christ-formation within their souls. This concept encompasses the mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit and transformative actions revealed in Christian doctrine (Romans 1:17). The Bible emphasizes the intricate relationship between humanity and the divine. Christ's command to love one another as He does (John 15:12). Studying formation science should guide Christians in their pursuit of becoming "homo unius libri" - individuals deeply rooted in the teachings of a single book, namely the Bible, reminiscent of the practices embraced by John Wesley (Baker, n.d as cited in McEwen, 2023, p.16).

This study aims to explore the profound significance of Formative Science. This discovery subsequently sparked further research in uncovering spirituality in the Bible, sourcing materials relevant to formative science, and establishing connections with existentialism. The similarity between Christlike disciplines and the pursuit of adopting theology has captivated the researcher's attention and interest in this topic.

Further exploration for this research includes the question: How should Christians distinguish between religious virtues (religiosity) and those reflected in God experienced through a personal relationship with Him?

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