LDR807-12, Transforming Self-Concept for Leader Development

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Write a 5-page paper based on the description below:

a. Synthesize and integrate all that you have learned thus far to write an essay on the following question: “Why are self-concept, spirituality, and moral development so critical for leadership?”

Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the

remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

Leadership is central to transformation and development. Leadership is a calling to serve that is grounded in God’s purpose for your life. According to Johnson (2009) “Discovering our calling encompasses every aspect of life-relationships, job, volunteer activities, leisure, and participation in spiritual communities. Leaders who have a clear sense of their individual purpose are more likely to join organizations that match their objectives and values. They are more satisfied and committed as members, focus on meaningful tasks that match their abilities, and are better equipped to serve others” pp. 81.According to Sudamann, great leadership starts with self-leadership. Therefore self-concept, spirituality and moral development are essential for leadership because true leadership, in particular, Christian leadership is holistic and utilises a whole person approach to self-leadership and leading others.

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At the heart of leadership is self-development and reflection and this is reflected through image dei, that is leadership that is centred on the image of God as it is for the Christian scholar practitioner and leader. Self-concept is different from self-esteem or self-worth. Self-concept is the centre of self-development and answers the question who am I? This is the point at which all knowledge stems, i.e. knowledge of self. This aspect of knowing oneself is essential for leadership and provides grounding for holistic leadership. Self-Concept of the leader is as important as follower self-concept in leader effectiveness and management (Tyagi, Gupta & Moses, 2019). Christian/biblical anthropology and worldview represents human beings in relation to God. Because we were created in God’s image (imago Christi) and given leadership/dominion over the world and its inhabitants (Genesis 1:26-27), this fact is fundamental to our self-concept and identity as children of God and as leaders. Therefore knowing oneself is critical to leadership.

Tanyi (2002) defines spirituality as “A personal search for meaning and purpose in life, which may or may not be related to religion. It entails connection to self-chosen and or religious beliefs, values, and practices that give meaning to life, thereby inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their optimal being. This connection brings faith, hope, peace, and empowerment. The results are joy, forgiveness of oneself and others, awareness and acceptance of hardship and mortality, a heightened sense of physical and emotional well-being, and the ability to transcend beyond the infirmities of existence” (pp. 506). This representation presents a powerful essence of spirituality that is rooted in existential connection and belief. For the Christian scholar, theology, orthodoxy and orthopraxis are interconnected for spiritual formation. This brings leadership that is centred and rooted in God. “Spirituality in the organizational setting operates simultaneously at two levels: individual and collective. Individual spirituality derives from the values, feelings, and practices of each person in the organization. Spiritually oriented individuals engage in behaviours designed to nurture their inner lives. They strive to get in touch with their deep desires and feelings, seek a sense of purpose, and want to establish deep connections with others and with a power greater than themselves. Collective spirituality consists of organizational culture and climate that fosters shared meaning and connection. Individual and collective spirituality are interrelated. Spiritually oriented employees help create spiritual climates; spiritual climates reinforce the efforts of individuals to nurture their inner lives and to build relationships with others. Spirituality and religion, while they overlap, are not identical. Religious traditions and institutions encourage and structure spiritual experiences, but spiritual values and encounters often occur outside of religious channels” (Johnson, 2009, pp 76-77).

According to Johnson (2009) “Spirituality equips leaders to function as moral persons and moral managers through mission and meaning; other-centeredness; integrity, humility and justice; and hope and joy. Leaders promote their personal spiritual development when they seek to determine their vocation; engage in self-reflective practices such as meditation, prayer, fasting, and study; and seek to serve others. Organizations can do their part to foster the spiritual development of leaders by creating a compelling vision, fostering intrinsic motivation, promoting shared spiritual values, and making space for the spirit. Promoting Ethical Leadership through spiritual development pays significant dividends. Spiritual leaders are better equipped to avoid scandal, to create the conditions for long-term organizational success, and to provide meaningful, fulfilling environments for themselves and their followers” p. 86

It almost goes without saying that morality and good leadership are interconnected and aligned. Kohlberg’s theory of moral development identifies an irreversible sequence of ethical reasoning comprising three levels and six stages. At level one is the pre-conventional level, there is stage one where people make decisions in order to avoid punishment and stage two where people ask “what is in it for me” that promotes a self-centred approach to moral decision making. Next is the conventional level where in stage three people examine societal and personal rules and norms and stage four where the moral person follows the rules and maintains societal norms by adhering to laws and norms out of a higher conscious reasoning. In level three, the post-conventional, there is stage five where there are social contracts established and stage six universal ethical principle association that is the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Kholberg contends that this stage is not reached by many individuals, though he purports that it does exist (Mathes, 2021). Moral development is important to leadership because it highlights an ethical authority that is paramount to good leadership principles and practise that of good judgement and logical decision making that are founded on a principled way of being. Ethical leadership presupposes morality demonstrating professional and appropriate conduct that encourages positive relationships with employees and the organization as a whole (Zhu, Zheng, He, Wang, & Zhang, 2017).

“Self-reflective practices put leaders in touch with their inner lives. These rituals involve self-examination and communication with God or a greater power. Such practices have practical as well as spiritual benefits for leaders, promoting mental and physical health, reducing stress and burnout, and helping them deal with crises” (Johnson, 2009, pp. 82). Self-concept, spirituality and moral development are key cornerstones to holistic approaches to leadership. They centre the leader as rooted, identity focused, ethical and moral citizens who know how to lead with purpose.

Works Cited

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