Transforming People Problems

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Assignment #3 – Essay

1. Select a people issue you are passionate about. Write a 5-page paper applying transformational leadership concepts, compose a research project for addressing this social issue while working in communities with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Include the following elements:

a. Analyze the nature of man from theological, sociological, and psychological perspectives as they relate to your chosen issue.

b. Analyze the behavioral motivation for the chosen people problem issue and the leader’s role in influencing a solution.

c. Examine methods of communication to build trust in this situation.d. Describe conflict resolution techniques that can be used.

2. 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).

To increase completed long-term missionary assignments and recruitment of service missionaries, churches & mission organizations should incorporate both a vocational and spiritual gift assessment to their training programs. The benefits of doing so will allow better placement and outcomes that will positively impact everyone involved: the missionary, sending organization/church, and the entity (and community) served by the missionary.

“Human nature”, often explained as the “why” people choose to cheat and steal instead of doing good. Galatians 5:17 tells us that there is a conflict within each of us making us more inclined to sin because of the battle between good and evil (i.e., sin). One way Christians alleviate societal issues and the outcomes of those evils is through missionary work saving souls for Christ. Today, that can be done in the workplace or the church; or through community service, education, or business.

Scott (1970) studied missionaries, who were working towards “the abolition of child labor, the reduction of illiteracy, prison reform, and end to the convict lease system, the cultivation of ‘sympathy between all races,’ and the solution of race problems in a spirit of helpfulness and justice” in the early 1900’s (p3). Sadly, 124 years later we still have poverty, illiteracy, and modern day slavery (e.g., human trafficking and child labor) is a bigger problem than ever before. Since the need still exists, missionaries still go.

Last year, I was a part of a dynamic discussion about BAM and missionaries. It was fascinating to learn that most mission organizations are challenged by recruiting long term missionaries, burnout and team conflict. While massive amounts of good work has and continues to be done around the world, it made me ponder how we can address these challenges.

A review of literature revealed that Methodist women missionaries recognized the need for training; and opened the Scarritt Bible & Training School for missionaries and Christian workers in the late 1900’s (Scott, 1970). This got me thinking because program development is my area of expertise. As such, I began to think through the modification of a recently designed Career Training Program to address these issues.

The proposed training component involves using both a vocational and a spiritual gifts assessment and training how to use this information. For mission sending organizations, this concept is new and will require missionaries to be assigned differently. For the missionary, they may not be thinking about how their vocation or spiritual gifts are relevant to the mission. Lastly, the company/entity receiving the missionary may not have considered the importance of knowing the vocation and spiritual gifts of the person coming to serve with them.

While this seems to be a simple component to add to mission training programs there are other issues to consider. For example, Topliss (2024) revealed the individual’s search for and desire to belong to a vibrant community life; and the importance that this plays in the interest of developing one’s faith. The added training component could foster that vibrant community because individuals will be better matched. It is expected that this will reduce team conflict and result in less burn out, more completed assignments, as well as increased missionary, especially long term assignments.

There is also a training opportunity for BAM (Business As Mission) focused missionaries. Entrepreneurs who want to go overseas can work as missionaries starting and consulting businesses in an effort to stimulate the economy, foster mentoring, and to teach BAM. “(Adele’s) work training Chinese Bible women—local women evangelists—stands as the enduring positive result of her mission efforts” (Andrilenas, N., 2023, p2). Teaching locals in order to eventually take over a program or a business is always the emphasis of BAM. As such we can continue Adele’s work training locals to evangelize, as well as to do business the BAM way.

“Both Jesus’teachings and His selection of disciples indicate the importance of business to the welfare of human society” (Johnson, 2022, p7). This is where my proposed training component fits into a new BAM training program that will be designed based on Dr. Johnson’s 2022 BAM book. BAM’ers will receive an introduction to BAM (Business As Mission), complete vocational and spiritual gift assessments, Faith at Work, and chart a course (no punn intended) for the BAM career that God designed them for.

Clearly, there are many applications for the training component, as well as a Training Program that includes the vocation/spiritual gifts component. Since mission organizations have already told me their challenges there won’t be a lot of resistance. I may be too optimistic, but if someone doesn't know their godly design and has the opportunity to discover and better understand that design, then learn how to match that design with opportunities, who wouldn’t do it? It is a WIN-WIN.

For years missionary work has focused on things like supplies, manpower to fix things or teaching. In 2009, I went to the Philippines with my church. The two week short-term mission trip took me to the poorest parts of northern Luzon. It was sad to see the hundreds of orphans getting food from our nutrition (feeding) program. And at times I felt our VBS program with song and dance was lacking substance and just entertainment. “Come see the Americans”. The Orphanage’s Pastor and I connected on the environment, which inspired me to study international development work. Hopefully, one day I will be able to work on a green project that helps others. I dream of the possibilities to start these programs and share them with the Kingdom.

It is exciting to think about developing this training component and testing it for positive outcomes. I look forward to studying the impact of the proposed training Program. The hope is that short term missionaries will continue serving and that recruitment for long-term missionaries will increase.

Learning about Adele Fielde’s missionary career, which was marked by conflict from the ABMU leadership and fellow missionaries, was extraordinary because it happened in the 1800's.

“Her perseverance, self-advocacy, and cultivation of supporters secured her a continued place as a missionary” (Andrilenas, 2023, p2), but what a price to pay. Missionaries today may experience similar challenges. It is unknown whether experiences like these account for some of the results attributed to the problems presented in this paper. This too should be further researched.

Aside from challenges of missionary life and the program proposed, let’s review a little about the leadership side. The University of Notre Dame Australia started ‘In Altum’, a student-focused ministry and leadership program developed to address the concern over ‘missionary discipleship’ focused on “personal faith development, understanding of missionary discipleship on campus, preparation for future ministry, and understanding of contemporary challenges to discipleship” (Topliss, J, et al. 2024, p1). Researching student leaders and missionary programs, as well as ideas like this could be very helpful in an effort to understand missionary life today.

A “top-down, hierarchical, centralized leadership model proved to be detrimental to the LDS retention and recruitment rates. Gooren’s (2024) study shows the importance of knowing and adapting to your audience. At the time of the study (1990’s) annualMormon membership declined 1-2% year. Similarly yet more significantly, is the 2011 research Barna began reporting that 10% of Christians going to college experience deconversion annually. This is alarming and something I feel called to study and reverse by equipping students before they graduate high school. Students going through the STRIVE Career Program (another application for the use of vocational and spiritual gifting assessments).

### Related to leadership are teams and those that are well matched operate smoothly. I hope to study and find the same is true for mission teams. Likewise, too many chiefs is disruptive, just as too many workers and no chief would be. My program is designed with resources to teach people about their Godly gifts and how to use them to ensure systems run smoothly. This will motivate change because the program will operate efficiently; and happy campers ensure the focus is on the task at hand, not the chaos that disrupts the flow and makes for a challenging work environment.

Future recommendations include using this new training program with BAM’ers and conducting a longitudinal study with each application (i.e., STRIVE, missions, and BAM).

In conclusion, using a vocational assessment in conjunction with a spiritual gifts assessment will be a game changer for the mission field, churches, colleges, and the Kingdom. Christians are always going on short term mission trips to serve. The hope is that the training component will enable missionaries to be better matched to assignments that will result in more positive experiences and outcomes that will transform missionaries and the mission field to be more impactful, reduce challenges and increase the number of missionaries.

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