Effective Leadership Styles for Effective Social Change

Assignment #4

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**Introduction: The Church's Servant Leadership over Authority Leadership: Social Change**

The following is an academic essay statement on the topic of servant leadership in poverty reduction efforts: Sure, here's the rewritten text: Poverty is a pervasive problem that affects millions of families worldwide, because when you watch the sufferings of the poor and you have the heart to help, then we are not the exception. Poverty is an enemy of human dignity, self-esteem, and potential. According to Kathy Lee Sullivan, Northcentral University, 2020, “the poor cry out for something to change. They cry out for food, health care, transportation, education, good governance, and the hope for a better future and well-being for their children. Aid has been presented in many ways to the African people, mostly in the form of food or financial aid. These forms of aid may be needed in some areas of Africa, but they are not the answer to the complex factors involved in poverty project development." To combat poverty, GSO focuses on Kenya's most vulnerable citizens, particularly women and children, by offering a long-term solution to the issue of their daily lack of access to necessities.

While various approaches like the above have been offered to address poverty, including authoritative leadership, servant leadership has emerged as a powerful tool for reducing poverty. While the various approaches above have been used, guided, or offered under authoritative leadership, it is servant leadership that addresses the complex factors in poverty. This essay explores servant leadership principles and how they can be applied in poverty reduction efforts. Ultimately, this essay will argue that servant leadership is a more effective and promising tool for reducing poverty than authoritative leadership. Let's explore how servant leadership can empower individuals, families, and communities to overcome poverty and achieve their full potential.

Poverty is a pervasive issue with far-reaching effects on families worldwide. Through the research process, the research discovery is the growing importance of servant leadership in addressing poverty. A leadership approach based on empathy and serving others has the potential to be not only effective but also essential for the growth and success of any organization or community.

David McMurrey et al., in chapter 2 of the book ‘Essentials of Communication’, discuss key concepts related to communication processes. They emphasize the importance of understanding the audience, the role of feedback, and the impact of nonverbal communication. The chapter outlines different communication models and highlights effective strategies for enhancing interpersonal communication skills in various contexts, explaining these three ways of persuasive communication as Aristotle (384–322 BCE) established three appeals to readers and listeners in the Art of Rhetoric: logos, pathos, and ethos. These appeals are both interconnected and directly tied to key parts of the rhetorical situation (genre/form, audience, and deliverer, respectively), all for social change. In the context of social change, it is critical to remember that personal behavior plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of the message. When it comes to bringing about social change, we should keep in mind that our behavior can have a big impact on how students of social change perceive and act upon our message. As change agents, we need to be aware of our actions, as they can greatly influence the reception and implementation of our message by the audience.

**Essential Elements of Servant Leadership**

Uddin Shahin, an Army commander and general staff member at College Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, explores the characteristics of servant leadership in his article, "Characteristics of Servant Leadership Can Supplement Army Leadership Requirements" (2019). Shahin's thesis, completed at North Georgia College and State University, Dahlonega, GA, emphasizes that a leader's role involves decision-making on strategy, providing guidance, setting the direction, or acting as a facilitator to support the group in achieving common objectives. Servant leaders are frequently described as individuals who prioritize the personal and professional development needs of their followers above other considerations. The concept of "servant leadership" revolves around how leaders interact with their subordinates and the resulting outcomes. It entails being truthful with followers and treating them fairly, as it is common to assume that leadership is primarily about wielding power and control over others. However, servant leadership presents an alternative viewpoint on the essence of being a leader. One of the distinguishing characteristics and capabilities of servant leaders is their capacity to listen to their followers and foster enduring relationships with them. Servant leadership is posited as an essential quality that all leaders should possess. While some may argue that servant leadership contradicts the principles of a hierarchical, leader-centric organization, such as the military or a corporation, the reality is that even within a hierarchical framework, there is a need for leaders to serve their profession. This is because the success of an organization hinges on the well-being and welfare of its members. Uddin continues that by putting their followers' needs and concerns above their own, servant leaders can create a high-functioning team that is motivated, engaged, and productive. Robert K. Greenleaf, the father of the term "servant leadership," developed the concept during his forty years of employment at AT&T. According to Greenleaf, a leader has to put the welfare and well-being of their followers first. Servant leaders listen to their needs and concerns and prioritize their growth and development. By doing so, servant leaders can create a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration where everyone feels valued and heard. An article from Ministry Magazine discusses how preaching or speaking can be used to persuade others. According to the article, the ancient Greeks regarded public speaking as an art form and believed that there were three ways to persuade people. My opinion is that if you want to achieve effective communication, you must incorporate logos, pathos, and ethos, according to Carlos on Transforming Ethos.

**My Own Servant Leadership Experiences**

As the founder and director of a faith-based organization, Grace Sufficient Organization (GSO), we provide food, school supplies, and school fees to vulnerable children. Additionally, we offer individual and group counseling and advocacy for widows and children regarding property inheritance after the death of a husband. This advocacy ministry is essential for maintaining the family's rights to marital inheritance, as family members often attempt to evict the grieving family from their homes and seize their land.

I have found that even with the best intentions, there will always be individuals who oppose your ideas, regardless of how clear and convincing your arguments may be. Sometimes, people's opinions are so entrenched that no amount of persuasive communication can sway them. Moreover, in some cases, adapting the message to meet the audience's unique needs and preferences may not be practical. For instance, if the message contradicts the core beliefs of the audience, it is unlikely that they will be persuaded, no matter how effectively the message is presented.

In such dilemmas, the concept of servant leadership becomes crucial. Servant leadership thrives when the leader connects with the audience, embodying their experiences and concerns. By becoming relatable and demonstrating a genuine commitment to serving others, especially marginalized groups, a servant leader can build trust and foster understanding, creating pathways for meaningful dialogue and change. Ultimately, this approach not only empowers the community but also reinforces the mission of organizations like GSO in their pursuit of justice and support for those in need.

**Servant Leadership's Core Values Over Authoritative:**

A study by Lo et al. (2020) highlights the effectiveness of servant leadership, emphasizing its foundation in three key factors. A notable distinction from authoritative leadership is the focus on collaboration.

1. Servant leaders prioritize open communication and engagement, actively listening to individuals and families to understand their unique challenges. This approach allows them to identify specific needs and develop tailored strategies to combat poverty. By leveraging the diverse talents of community members, servant leaders empower individuals to contribute to the creation of a more equitable society
2. In contrast, authoritative leaders often impose top-down solutions, expecting compliance without considering individual circumstances. This can breed feelings of resentment and resistance, undermining efforts to address poverty effectively. In essence, servant leadership fosters an inclusive environment that values each person's input, making it more effective in tackling complex social issues.
3. Servant leadership emphasizes empowering individuals and families by teaching them skills and self-sufficiency, akin to teaching someone how to fish rather than simply giving them a fish. In contrast, authoritative leadership can create feelings of helplessness, as it often involves a leader dictating how others should improve their lives. A key distinction between the two styles lies in their approaches to empowerment.
4. On the other hand, authoritative leaders tend to perpetuate the idea of helplessness, imposing solutions without considering the unique needs and perspectives of those they lead. This approach can hurt the self-esteem and confidence of individuals and families, making it harder for them to overcome poverty.

Please keep in mind the following statement: "Servant Leadership Creates Lasting Change; Authoritative Leadership Creates Short-Term Solutions." In his 1970 essay "The Servant as Leader," Robert K. Greenleaf first proposed the idea of "servant leadership." In contrast to authoritative leadership, which tends to offer quick fixes, servant leadership is better equipped to bring about sustainable change.

According to (Arain et al., 2019), servant leaders take a holistic approach to addressing poverty, working with individuals and families to develop long-term strategies that address the underlying causes of poverty. On the other hand, authoritative leaders often focus on short-term relief without tackling the root issues, which can exacerbate the problem. Research indicates that servant leadership is characterized by kindness. It emphasizes an emotional approach to learning, caring, and fostering more nurturing interactions that are more effective in reducing poverty compared to authoritative leadership, which relies on, as a result, interest has been attributed to the rising topic of mental health under the umbrella of behavioral health.

* In this context, rebellion refers to the pushback or resistance that individuals or groups may exhibit in response to leadership styles that do not align with their needs or interests. When authoritative leadership is employed—characterized by a top-down approach, lack of inclusivity, and insufficient consideration of followers' perspectives—those being led may feel alienated, undervalued, or oppressed. This can lead to feelings of resentment, discontent, and ultimately rebellion, which might manifest in various ways.
* In the workplace, rebellion might be seen through decreased engagement, refusal to adhere to directives, or even active opposition to leadership initiatives. Employees may withdraw from organizational citizenship behaviors, such as going above and beyond their job requirements, choosing instead to express their dissatisfaction through disengagement or conflict.
* Within marginalized communities targeted for poverty reduction, rebellion could manifest as skepticism toward programs or interventions that do not incorporate the voices of the community members. If these individuals feel that their needs or insights are ignored, they may resist participation or even challenge the motivations behind such initiatives, demanding more equitable and participatory approaches.

Overall, understanding rebellion in this context highlights the importance of leadership that prioritizes inclusion, empathy, and empowerment, which can significantly impact the effectiveness of efforts aimed at reducing poverty and fostering community well-being.

Please keep in mind the following statement: "Servant leadership creates lasting change; authoritative leadership creates short-term solutions." In his 1970 essay "The Servant as Leader," Robert K. Greenleaf first proposed the idea of "servant leadership." In contrast to authoritative leadership, which tends to offer quick fixes, servant leadership is better equipped to bring about sustainable change.

I believe that Canavesi et al. (2022) make a compelling argument for the effectiveness of servant leadership in reducing poverty. They reference several studies, such as the work by Hu and Liden (2011), which found that servant leadership is associated with increased job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior, both of which can contribute to improved outcomes in poverty reduction efforts. Additionally, (Sendjaya et al., 2016) found that servant leadership is linked to increased trust and commitment among followers, further supporting the positive impact of servant leadership style vs. authoritative leadership on poverty reduction efforts

The authors rightly emphasize the importance of understanding the motivations and communication styles of team members. However, I disagree with their implication that leaders should not adapt their leadership approach to suit individual preferences. While it is essential to create a culture of open communication and collaboration. I firmly support the notion that servant leadership is pivotal for the growth and success of any organization. This leadership style prioritizes the needs of team members, fosters a supportive environment, and promotes inclusivity and mutual respect. Therefore, I respectfully disagree with the authors' stance and assert that servant leadership is a valuable approach that every leader should strive to embody.

**Servant Leadership and Culture Collaboration**

The *'Handbook of Religion and Communication'* by John Wiley & Sons emphasizes the importance of considering cultural backgrounds in communication for servant leaders to bridge the gap between cultures, tribes, races, and social classes. By engaging and seeking to understand, leaders can Help ensure that no one is left out. Ignoring cultural differences can perpetuate stereotypes and deepen societal divisions. It's crucial to strive for understanding and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds to foster greater unity and build stronger communities. Regardless of our backgrounds or beliefs, we all play a part in bridging the gap between different groups. Embracing our differences, working towards unity, and cultivating a culture of excellence can empower and motivate everyone to achieve their goals. Let's embrace servant leadership and become the kind of leaders our followers deserve.

**Attributes of a Servant-Leader**

Ricardia S. Lewis from San Diego, California, stated in May 2023 that according to Crippen and Willows (2019), there are several attributes that servant leaders are said to possess. These attributes are based on Greenleaf's 1970 essay and are crucial for the growth and development of servant leaders.

1. The first attribute is active listening. A servant leader needs to listen to what is and is not said meticulously. The leader strives to pinpoint and assist in interpreting other individuals' wills. Therefore, listening in this context is not just a strategy but also a perspective on understanding. Besides, servant-leaders heed their innate voices through constant rumination (Crippen & Willows, 2019). Ricardia S. Lewis continues that the characteristics that involve servant leadership are foresight, commitment, awareness, and society-building. Quoting Greenleaf (1970), the essence of servant-leadership is drawn primarily from the desire to serve. Ideally, a servant leader is concerned first with the need to serve rather than the need to lead. On the other hand, authoritative leaders see employees primarily as tools to accomplish tasks, limiting communication with followers to giving instructions about the work that needs to be done. Research shows that the well-being of followers is not a priority or topic of discussion for traditional, authoritative, or dictatorial leaders. Instead, their focus is on achieving success for themselves about the success of the organization.
2. The second attribute is empathy. Servant leaders need to be empathetic when listening to others. In the process, they need to illustrate acceptance and acknowledgment. Such a leader also implies the good intentions of others. The leader also communicates to others that their worth depends not on performance but on who they are as individuals with inherent worth. Ricardia continues to quote Chan and So (2017), saying
3. The third attribute is healing. Individual, family, and community healing occurs when servant leaders are aware that individuals may come with hurt of all kinds, especially emotional ones. The leader has to reach out to such individuals and bring alleviation and reinstatement. The leader also partners with followers to overcome life's hurdles and repair relations.

Healing is a feeling that comes with inner peace and freedom to Individuals, families, and communities in the public square According to research, it is a multifaceted process that involves individuals and groups coming together to restore well-being and address the impacts of trauma, conflict, or loss will look like the one mentioned below, it could also include several key elements:

* Connection and Support: Building strong, supportive relationships among community members is essential. This often includes creating spaces for open dialogue where people can share their feelings, experiences, and concerns without judgment. At Grace Sufficient Organization (GSO), this has been our first stepping 7stone to better social health and community acceptance.
* Collective Action: Communities would work together to identify common issues and take collective action. This to GSO involves organizing events and forming support groups, or engaging in community service projects that promote healing and resilience.
* Cultural Practices: In GSO communities, we utilize cultural traditions and practices as part of their healing process. These include storytelling, rituals, art, music, and dance, all of which have helped individuals express their emotions and find solace.
* Access to Resources: GSO, we are ensuring that community members have access to mental health services, educational resources, and economic opportunities, which is vital for long-term healing. This involves partnerships with local church organizations or government agencies like the Department of Health to provide the necessary support.
* Empowerment and Advocacy: Our community healing often emphasizes empowering individuals to take charge of their healing journeys.
* Restorative Justice: In cases involving conflict or crime, GSO communities explore restorative justice practices that focus on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and fostering accountability rather than punitive measures.
* Holistic Approaches: Our organization of GSO is dedicated to effective community healing as we acknowledge the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being. A holistic approach that incorporates wellness programs, counseling, and other supportive initiatives.
* Building Resilience: Finally, to us GSO community healing is about fostering resilience—helping individuals and the community as a whole develop the skills and resources needed to endure and bounce back from adversity.

Overall, community healing is about creating an environment where individuals feel safe, valued, and supported, allowing them to share their stories, heal together, and move forward as a stronger, more cohesive community.

**Conclusion**

Servant leadership prioritizes the needs and perspectives of those being led over the leader's authority and power. It is based on kindness, empathy, and servanthood, which are critical in addressing poverty and other social issues. Servant leadership empowers individuals, families, and communities to overcome poverty and achieve their full potential. It is better suited to achieve long-term and sustainable social change than authoritative leadership. Therefore, adopting servant leadership as a model for leadership in the church can bring about necessary social change in individual lives, families, and society. Along the way, they had much to overcome, beginning with themselves. The result was complete loyalty and service to the master all the way. Mark 1:16–20; Matthew 4:18–22; Luke 5:2-11, Peter was fishing with his brother Andrew. Jesus famously said, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” and Peter and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him. Look at the pattern here of Jesus calling these families to follow Him so He could make them fishers of men. Paul was an individual who had no family mentioned when he came to follow Jesus. Back to the point that Jesus wants to change individuals and families to change society.

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**Appendix A: Servant leadership**

1. **Matthew 20:26–28** NIV: Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.
2. **John…13:14-15** AMPC “If I then, your Lord and Teacher (Master), have washed your feet, you ought [it is your duty, you are under obligation, you owe it] to wash one another’s feet.”
3. **Mark 10:42–45** NLT: So, Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you, it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else." For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Appendix B: Authoritative Leadership**

In my opinion, this model is mostly and commonly observed in the leaders of the Gentiles, as referenced by Jesus.

1. **Matthew 20:25-27**: NIV "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."
2. **Mark 10:42**:[Berean Study Bible.](https://biblehub.com/bsb/mark/10.htm) So, Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors exercise authority over them.”

**1 Peter 5:**3 [New Living Translation](https://biblehub.com/nlt/1_peter/5.htm). Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your good example.

Key Differences

* **Focus**: Servant leadership prioritizes the needs and growth of others, while authoritative leadership focuses on maintaining power and control.
* **Approach**: Servant leaders lead by example and service, whereas authoritative leaders often command and control.
* **Biblical Endorsement**: The Bible elevates servant leadership as the ideal, with Jesus as the ultimate model.

“Remember the sobering words of Jesus in his prophecy about the last judgment in Matthew 25:31–26. In dividing the sheep from the goats, Jesus warned about the danger of neglecting social justice: "Truly, I say to you, to the extent that you did not [provide just help] for the least of these, you did not do it for Me either. These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

(NKJV) Philippians 4:13: "I know how to be abasing, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. And plead the cause of the poor and needy. But idle chatter leads only to poverty. Do justice to the afflicted and needy."

1. Matthew 25:35-40: "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed."
2. Matthew 25:45: "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."
3. Matthew 25:36: "The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor."
4. Deuteronomy 15:17: "Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'