

ADVENTIST INSTITUTIONS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE
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“ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC SQUARE:
Maintaining Our Identity as we Develop Relationships with the Community”

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“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”
--Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The relationship is the communication bridge between people.” --Alfred Kadushin

“Help thy brother’s boat across, and lo! thine own has reached the shore.”—Hindu Proverb

“Oneness with Christ enables [people] to wield an influence far above that of the renowned of this world. While copying the example of Christ, they have, with His grace, power to benefit the church and the community. Their influence is felt just in proportion to the distinctness of the line of demarcation which separates them in spirit and principle from the world.”
--Ellen G. White (WM 296)

“The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”
--Ellen G. White (MH 470)

“I dream of an NAD where we unite to celebrate the expression of our faith in our communities.”
--Dan Jackson’s Dream no. 3
among eleven expressed at
recent Year End Meetings

After reading some of these quotes that are relevant, I think, to my assigned topic, I’d like now to turn to the philosophical/theological undergirding for developing relationships with the community, share some of my experience, and then consider the way forward.

I

According to Carol Geary Schneider, former president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “civic engagement claims a formative place in today’s conceptions of educational excellence.” [Peer Review, Spring, 2003, p. 3]

There are obviously many different models for this civic engagement, but as Christian, and specifically Adventist, institutions of higher learning, we must be guided in our vision and work by sound theology. For my own involvement in developing relationships with the community, and for a theological undergirding of how we have gone about our work, I am very indebted, including extensively below, to concepts articulated by Aurelie A. Hagstrom in “Christian Hospitality in the Intellectual Community” [Chapter 7 in Douglas Henry and Michael Beaty, editors, *Christianity and the Soul of the University*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006].

The Christian virtue of hospitality as a key virtue for Christian higher education is conveyed well by Elizabeth Newman: “The practice of hospitality—by reflecting a larger tradition and thus the formation of specific virtues—creates a place (a space) for Christian identity to appear as a whole way of life. The practice forms our understanding of the intellectual life and even more our understanding of the final goal of higher education: love and faithfulness to God.” [“Hospitality and Christian Higher Education,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 33, no. 1, 2003, p. 87]

Hospitality is fundamentally an expression of and witness to God’s grace, since all of us are guests of God’s hospitality and are called to embody that hospitality to others through word and deed alike. As such, it may help to bridge the conversation between those concerned about whether a university is sufficiently “Christian” or “Adventist” in its daily campus life, and those who are concerned to protect academic freedom and promote rigorous scholarly inquiry in the classroom.

One qualification demands attention from the outset: hospitality reflects a radically different and compelling alternative to tolerance. Hospitality is preferable to tolerance principally because tolerance—unlike Christian hospitality—is unable to sustain either communities or conversations in moments of intellectual, moral, or religious crisis. Tolerance is ill suited to address matters of deep controversy because of its tendency to trivialize what is most important to us. It is, in fact, a false sort of engagement. Rather than demanding a true acknowledgment and embrace of the other, tolerance instead involves a type of “entertainment” of the other. Rather than the costly, risky engagement of hospitality, tolerance superficially entertains another’s worldview, beliefs, and values. This “entertainment mode” of tolerance has no built-in telos or end that would arrive at an objective moral truth. Tolerance is more an exercise in abstraction—a distancing from distinct moral settings; it is a mode that fits aptly with a postmodern, pluralistic world in which truth is always elusive and, in fact, infinitely deferred.

By contrast, hospitality is incarnational, morally attuned, and prompted by commitments to truthfulness in word and deed. It does not exist as a disembodied attitude toward

others, but instead brings concrete strangers together in rituals of peaceful engagement. Christian hospitality grows out of the morally rigorous demands of Jesus Christ's unsurpassable example. And while skirting false dichotomies between legalism and latitudinarianism, hospitable Christians remain steadfastly committed to "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" [Phil. 4:8 NIV]. They remember that Christian hospitality must follow the pattern of God's hospitality to us, extended supremely through Christ's death for us "while we were still sinners" [Rom. 5:8 NIV]. In all these ways, hospitality surpasses tolerance by demanding a personal, authentic encounter that is self-emptying and open even to those with whom we have deep philosophical, theological, and political disagreements. Hospitality thus involves far greater commitments and costs than mere tolerance, which aspires to little more than "entertaining" those who, while different from us, are nice to us, so that we in turn may be nice to them.

Hospitality above all is a biblical phenomenon that is developed as a moral category in both the Old and New Testaments, one that Scripture exegetes, theologians, and ethicists have rediscovered as a sustaining virtue for Christian community of all kinds. Biblically, for example, one finds the practice of hospitality in evidence when Abraham welcomes the three heavenly visitors at Mamre in Genesis 18 and thereby opens himself to the surprising revelation of God's promise and plan. The New Testament notion of hospitality is evidenced in experiences like the countercultural table fellowship of Jesus of Nazareth in Luke's Gospel. Eating with the outcast tax collectors and sinners, Jesus welcomes all and invites them into the kingdom of God through his healing words of forgiveness.

How can the Christian practice of hospitality serve as a moral category for the enrichment of life within our Adventist institutions? In the first instance, it can help us to frame questions of diversity on our campuses. For example, students from different religious traditions who are welcomed to our campuses are guests of our hospitality. They are the "others" who challenge us to make room, be receptive, and remain attentive to their worldviews. The sponsoring Adventist community of the university is the "host," and those students, faculty, administrators, or staff from diverse religious traditions, who are part of the campus community, are the "guests." Understanding the character of both roles is important, because clarity on these points allows the host and the guest to be true to their identities in an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and welcome, and to do so without compromising into a bland relativism that diminishes the uniqueness and gifts of these identities.

Pushing the metaphor of hospitable host and welcomed guest one step further makes the point. In one sense a host is the one who sets the banquet table. Within the context of a church-related institution like ours, the "table is set" in a certain way according to the Adventist community. Guests are welcomed to the table, but the hosts are not expected to change the table setting simply because the guests are not used to the hosts' habits and customs. The religious identity, praxis, and worship of the host are not abandoned in the interchange of hospitality. Indeed, it is only the clear identity of the host that makes the guest feel secure and welcome. If the customs or habits of the table manners of the host

are unclear or ambiguous, the guest feels awkward and unsure of how to behave or react. The Adventist identity of the college or university has to be clear to others who are welcomed as guest.

Some might object that a host should accommodate the guest and even change any practices, customs, or rituals necessary to make sure one's guests are comfortable. However, Newman [p. 85] points out, "From this perspective, hospitality then simply underwrites the ideology of pluralism and diversity, . . . where we simply allow or tolerate different points of view." While a thoughtful practice of hospitality may require a certain flexibility of the host, the identity, traditions, and praxis of the host (and the guest) must be clearly maintained. The alternative is to let hospitality give way to the relativistic banalities of mere tolerance, denying host and guest alike the honest opportunity to judge, instruct, or learn from the other.

Hospitality, therefore, does not prohibit the judging, analyzing, and classification of the other. Nor does Christian hospitality imply a type of unconditionality and openness without any distinctions whatsoever. In fact, such free-floating unconditionality impinges on the integrity of both host and guest. Newman makes the helpful suggestion that the rubric of "making distinctions but not drawing boundaries" can be instructive here. Indeed, authentic engagement can happen only when real differences between host and guest are acknowledged, not ignored.

Hagstrom's whole chapter is well worth reading and pondering but I've shared enough, I hope, for you to see that the metaphor of hospitality can be helpful in theologically framing the questions of diversity and academic freedom. As a practice, hospitality integrates Adventist identity into the various dimensions of campus life, helping to establish the elusive quality of genuine community that the world vainly seeks apart from the church. Adventist colleges and universities—grounded in faith, sustained by hope, and prompted by love—can through the practice of Christian hospitality come to embody vital, lively places of learning, all the stronger and more interesting than their secular peers, and precisely because and not in spite of their religious identity. For these reasons, Christian hospitality thereby gives fitting expression to one mode of Christian faith as a foundation for intellectual community. In other words, Christian faith has something meaningful to add to the table of ideas. It is a persuasion among others.

II

Now we come to the "personal testimony" part of this presentation. I have been asked specifically to share what I have done at La Sierra University and with what results, certainly not as a model, but rather as a foil for our discussion of the issues involved.

When I arrived on campus it was quite clear that LSU had a suburban, if not urban, setting. It was also very clear to me that one of my priority tasks, therefore, was to take advantage of this opportunity and get involved in the community—so that it could be a resource to us while we were a resource to them. At the same time, the opportunity for

development of our former farm land presented itself, and this process and the result inevitably brought us into ever closer contact with our context in Riverside.

Academically, we joined Campus Compact, an organization created to promote greater campus-community involvement. We made “service-learning” an integral part of our newly-revised general education program which at La Sierra we call “University Studies.” We began to recognize what we could do in a practical sense for our students if we provided them internships in the community.

I cannot underestimate the assistance of community friends like Art Pick, the Presbyterian former CEO of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce who was also a LSU trustee and someone on the search committee who said “if you come, I’ll introduce you to the right people downtown so you can get involved there.” After his untimely passing (and, by the way, I had his funeral in the LSU Church—the first time most of the community leaders had been in that church), he was eventually replaced on the board of trustees by Henry Coil, a Methodist lawyer, contractor, and businessman who is one of Riverside’s leading citizens, one who has great influence among his peers. So I asked him to chair our newly-established Foundation Board which we formed to get the support for LSU of community leaders. The current chair, who took his place, is Mark Rubin, a Jewish developer who is very influential in our community and someone who puts his money where his mouth is when it comes to the support of higher education.

Then there is also Jim Erickson, former Vice Chancellor for Advancement for the University of California, who has retired in Riverside and has become an unofficial advisor to us in our attempt to more effectively integrate into our host community.

During my years at La Sierra, I have been involved in such community organizations as the following:

President of the Raincross Group (movers and shakers whose goal is to affect what happens in Riverside)

Chair of the Education Committee of the Monday Morning Group (an invitation-only group of movers and shakers whose goal is to affect what happens in Riverside County with regular lobbying in Sacramento and Washington, DC)

County Campaign Chair and Board Chair of the United Way of the Inland Valleys

Board Chair of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce (1700 members)

Chair of the World Affairs Council of Inland Southern California

Chair of the International Relations Council of the City of Riverside which involved coordinating the work of our seven sister city relationships

Member of the Mayor’s Higher Education/Business Council

Member of the Riverside Arts Council

Member of our Congressman’s Science and Technology Education Partnership Board

Governor Schwarzenegger’s Appointee to the California Post-Secondary Commission

Member of the University of California Riverside School of Medicine Advisory

Member of the Riverside Community College Chancellor’s Circle

Member of the Community Foundation’s Advisory

Member of the Mayor’s Multicultural Forum

Member of the Metropolitan Water District's Blue Ribbon Committee on the Future of Water in the State of California
Co-Chair of the Task Force to Make Riverside an International-Student Friendly City
Executive Director of the LSU Foundation Board (composed of several dozen community leaders)
Chair of the Board for Loma Linda Broadcasting Network

Presumably this incomplete listing is sufficient to suggest that my community involvement has been a major and sustained effort on my part, made possible when I was a president, only because I had a Provost who essentially ran the internal, campus operation, while I concentrated on our external constituencies.

I have to note also the success of such campus involvements in the community as: Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), now known as Exactus, which has made a name for itself not only locally but nation-wide and even internationally. Our School of Education's Collaborative with the Alvord Unified School District's in founding a Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the edge of campus. Our Art Department's community involvement in the Riverside Art Museum, the Riverside County Symphony, Riverside Art Walk, etc. (to name only one department).

It is now very clear to just about everyone that LSU is a dependable resource to the community, demonstrated by the way the city and its organizations regularly come to us for assistance, to use our facilities as venues, etc. As a result, when the Mayor joined our Foundation Board he said it was "all about debt." The chancellor of the local community college district has publicly called LSU "the moral conscience of our community."

It is now standard for all community events downtown to offer vegetarian options when meals are served. Few organizations now have committees on Sabbath; for instance, the annual community Chamber of Commerce strategic planning session involving fifty business people is now regularly held all day Friday instead of all day Saturday; the city's annual Festival of Youth involving hundreds of high school, college, and university young people is now held on Sundays rather than Saturdays, and so forth.

In summary, LSU has moved from a situation where few society leaders knew anything about us to one where practically everyone knows about us and to whom our identity as an Adventist, faith-based university is very clear and widely respected. Yes, there have been baptisms that have resulted, and yes, people not of our faith have given us millions of dollars for our mission.

III

Such a situation as I have described does not happen by accident; it is obviously intentional. Caryn McTighe Musil, former vice president for diversity, equity, and global initiatives for the Association of American Colleges and Universities delineated six expressions of citizenship: exclusionary, oblivious, naïve, charitable, reciprocal, and generative. They represent both faces and phases of citizenship. Each reflects different

definitions of community, values, and knowledge. They are summarized in the chart below [from Peer Review, Spring, 2003, p. 8].

Faces/Phases of Citizenship

Face/Phase	Community is ...	Civic Scope	Levels of Knowledge	Benefits
Exclusionary	only your own	civic disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one vantage point (yours) • monocultural 	a few & only for awhile
Oblivious	a resource to mine	civic detachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observational skills • largely monocultural 	one party
Naive	a resource to engage	civic amnesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no history • no vantage point • acultural 	random people
Charitable	a resource that needs assistance	civic altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of deprivations • affective kindness & respect • multicultural, but yours is still the norm center 	the giver's feelings, the sufferer's immediate needs
Reciprocal	a resource to empower and be empowered by	civic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legacies of inequalities • values of partnering • intercultural competencies • arts of democracy • multiple vantage points • multicultural 	society as a whole in the present
Generative	an interdependent resource filled with possibilities	civic prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • struggles for democracy • interconnectedness • analysis of interlocking systems • intercultural competencies • arts of democracy • multiple interactive vantage points • multicultural 	everyone now & in the future

Exclusionary. The face of exclusionary citizenship is produced by gated academic environments, which lock students in and all other entities out. It can also be produced by a curriculum that ferociously guards traditional borders. In both cases, the community is narrowly defined only as one's own, which makes *civic disengagement* the ruling value. Because trying to live as if one were on an island instead of a globe is impossible, the benefits reaped are temporary. The exclusionary phase sees the world from a single vantage point (its own) and is distinguished by a monocultural sensibility.

Oblivious. The "drive-by" service-learning experiences can often inadvertently produce the face of oblivious citizenship. For example, a large state university located in a bucolic setting busied their

predominantly white students, who had little preparation for the experience, into an inner-city food kitchen for the homeless. As a young college student sat alone at a table with patrons, a homeless man asked her, "Why are you here?" She answered, "I guess I'm here to watch you." Not surprisingly, the man became very angry and abusive. He recognized the kind of *civic detachment* represented by this face of citizenship. In such encounters, the community is perceived as a resource to mine primarily for the benefit of the onlooker. While the student may gain new facts, the experience might simply reinforce stereotypes without widening the student's cultural lenses. Students in this phase, as well as the next, can serve but still remain safely unchanged.

Naive. The naive face of citizenship is characterized not by civic detachment but by *civic amnesia*. While the community is seen as a resource to engage, the lack of historical knowledge about its residents or an analysis of its power dynamics limits the learning and the benefits of the experience. For example, a well-meaning student from an elite private college worked in a summer program with inner city youth. The young man arranged to hold the final event at the yacht club where he sailed and invited the kids' families. He later explained with some dismay, "I can't understand why more of the parents didn't come." He was not so much monocultural as acultural. Had the student had a course in which he had studied economic stratification, the urban and cultural history of the city, or been engaged in community-based research that dislodged him as the normative center, it is likely he would have organized a more appropriate final event for the families he cared so much about.

Charitable. This is perhaps the most typical face of citizenship at college campuses. Motivated by *civic altruism*, students see the community as an entity that needs help. Campus programs deliver food to the hungry, blankets to the homeless, and repair homes for the elderly. The knowledge acquired makes students aware of deprivations, and they develop a kindness toward those they seek to help. Usually more multicultural in their sensibility in this phase, students risk serving rather than empowering others, which does not alter the systems that produce the deprivations.

When lodged within the framework of a course that employs both analytical and reflective components, such charitable outreach to communities in need can take on new dimensions that move students toward the next phase of citizenship. In well-constructed courses designed to foster civic learning, students can examine larger structural causes of inequality, compare individual remedies with collective, broader social policies, and explore the histories in under-resourced communities of agency which they have long employed to help each other survive in the face of meager options.

Reciprocal. For many students, the faces of citizenship are indeed phases, representing a developmental arc. Each phase can help students understand the limits of their knowledge, analytical lenses, and evolving moral sensibilities. The value animating this reciprocal phase is *civic engagement*. A program at a large Midwestern research university is structured to cultivate this more complex and socially responsible civic learning by having students and the institution negotiate with community partners about the shape and purpose of their communal project. The outline for the research, the nature of the reciprocally useful product they create, and the format evolve over time, through negotiation and experimentation.

In one example, students worked with an African American historical society whose rich archives were in disarray and unavailable to the wider public. Working together, they decided to have the university help catalogue and digitize the collection. Then they decided to focus on the striking narrative describing the underground railroad that had flourished right in their county in the midst of the abolitionist movement. They took things a step further by producing Web-based curricular materials for elementary and middle school children based on the archives and also developed a traveling, public, interactive display.

In the civic learning students acquired in this curriculum-centered, community-connected environment, students came to regard the community not as deprived but as a resource to empower and be empowered by. In the process of their engagement, students learned about the legacies of inequalities, the historical narratives of resistance, the moral debates of the day, and the importance of being able to move among

multiple vantage points. By the end of the course, students developed more expansive multicultural knowledge and honed their intercultural competencies.

Generative. This cumulative phase of generative citizenship draws deeply from reciprocal citizenship but has a more all-encompassing scope with an eye to the future public good. The community is understood not as something separate and apart but as one and the same, an interdependent resource filled with possibilities. Students move from civic engagement as a value to *civic prosperity* as a goal. They seek the well being of the whole, an integrated social network in which all flourish. Like the previous phase, this one is dependent on students understanding the residual legacies of inequalities, but they have a wider understanding of the various histories of struggles for democracy. They also have a firmer grasp of the arts of democracy as interpersonal processes, as political mechanisms, and as aspirational values. As in the earlier phase, they can move easily from multiple vantage points and traverse cultural borders. But they also have a deeper grasp of systems that influence individuals and groups as well as a sophisticated knowledge of the levers that can make systems more equitable.

A liberal arts college in New England modeled this generative face of citizenship as it took leadership in an ambitious urban coalition of educators, businesses, religious groups, community activists, and governments to transform their declining city. They tackled the individual problems as pieces of whole cloth. They sought to improve housing, revamp the school system, reduce crime, institute economic development incentives, and create a new sense of community through long-term partnerships. Students continue to be involved in a variety of ways: as participants on community planning groups, as researchers applying their disciplinary knowledge to solve complex modern problems, and as civic entrepreneurs learning about the interconnections between economic development and the public good. Recently, the college has created dedicated courses that are gateways to engagement for first- and second-year students, thus opening curricular pathways to civic learning that promises to transform academic study as it transforms the larger society.

Educating students for generative citizenship cannot be accomplished without recalibrating the curriculum, its pedagogies, and the boundaries of faculty work. The box below offers one map for a developmental learning model for responsible citizenship. To a large extent, such an education certainly draws upon traditional disciplinary and analytical frameworks, but it also expands upon them. In this model, the world--and not just the library--is a center of focus. Applying knowledge and not merely demonstrating knowledge is commonplace. Experiencing the challenge of deliberating across differences to achieve agreed upon ends is a regular occurrence. Integrating what one knows with what one values in the service of the common good has become an everyday habit, not a serial, extracurricular activity.

Such an educational outcome represents an unquiet revolution indeed. It is just the sort Thomas Jefferson had in mind when he rested the future of the young republic on its power to educate its citizenry. Since those initial ambitious steps, the United States continues to discover how to transform democratic aspirations into democratic justice. Higher education dare not recoil from using its formidable resources in the service of that noble and ennobling ambition.

How can an administrator help in this process? Perhaps more than anything else, a leader builds bridges—bridges that help us move from where we are to where we need to be. Bridges made of hope and ideas and opportunity; bridges wide and strong enough so that all who wish to cross can do so safely.

Some of the steps in this bridge-building process include finding solid ground from which to build. Then we have to visualize where it is on the other side that we want to land. So the job of administration is to help us get there, to outline the steps that we need to take. Experience has taught us that most of the solutions are inherent in our communities.

We all know that there are bridges and then there are bridges. Some are strong, others are weak. Can you think of some characteristics of strong bridges? (flexible, resilient, able to support others) How about some characteristics of unsafe bridges? (narrow, inflexible, dangerous, liable to buckle or break under pressure)

In an organization that builds safe bridges, what messages are communicated to those involved? (confidence, trust, respect, passion, concern for others, confidence in your abilities to make a difference)

Presumably these bridges need to be wide enough and strong enough so that all who want to cross can do so safely. This means we can't assume that only certain people are interested in progressing. We have to recognize that nearly everyone seeks the opportunity to follow their dreams and achieve their goals, and most are willing to work hard to do that. For that reason, we have to be prepared for many people—and a diverse group of people--to cross.

What do we need to do in our organization to send a message that the bridge to the future is wide enough for all to cross? We need to invite a variety of groups, groups that represent the diversity in our constituency, to talk about where we are going and how we are getting there. We need to expand communication efforts to make sure all groups are included—too many people may believe the bridge is not wide enough for them.

According to Joel Barker, a noted contemporary futurist, there are at least five leadership lessons that persons like you and me, in our leadership roles, need to learn:

Leadership Lesson 1: Focus the majority of your efforts on the future. Followers don't have time to deal with this responsibility because their time is consumed taking care of today. It is the leader's responsibility, then, to take care of tomorrow.

Leadership Lesson 2: Understand the nature of fundamental change. A popular label for fundamental change is a paradigm shift. Have you ever noticed that new paradigms, which almost always drive fundamental change, usually show up before they are needed?! Furthermore, the rules for the new paradigm are almost always formulated by someone who is not a successful part of the prevailing paradigm. In other words, someone with little or no credibility in our field is probably going to be the person who brings us our future. Scary thought, isn't it! For that reason we need to stay in touch with people and keep abreast of events occurring outside of our particular institution, and even outside of higher education and Adventism. We must refuse to let our organization's makeup or culture grow stale.

Leadership Lesson 3: Appreciate complex systems and how they work. Small actions can cause enormous differences over time—as Enron found out. It has been said that for every action there is a reaction. Thus, there may be truth to the metaphor that says a butterfly can flap its wings in one country and cause a hurricane in another. For leaders, this means that they need to understand that because the world is systemic, the actions

they take in one area can affect other areas. We need to recognize that small changes can tremendously affect systemic organizations. Therefore leaders need to understand the consequences of our actions. James Gleick's book, *Chaos Making a New Science*, contains an example from folklore about complexity. It goes like this:

“For want of the nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of a horse, the rider was lost;
For want of the rider, the battle was lost;
For want of the battle, the kingdom was lost!”

Leadership Lesson 4: Examine your leadership style to see how it affects productivity. Research has shown that the charismatic leader uses excitement and enthusiasm to gain support. He or she generates devotion and positive stress by creating challenging goals, holding followers to demanding (yet achievable) deadlines, and expecting only the best from them. Followers express a high level of satisfaction in their jobs, because charismatic leaders establish a rich work environment, make sure people have the resources they need to do their jobs, and let followers contribute to the decision-making process. In contrast, the bully leader uses threats, condemnation, fear, and rejection to obtain compliance from followers. They create negative stress through cruel behavior, scornful attitudes, and the alienation of followers. The bully leader withholds resources and makes it difficult for employees to do their jobs. The environment is filled with risk, and people are set up to fail. As a result, followers express low levels of satisfaction in their work. According to the findings of Tor Dahl at the University of Minnesota, people who work for charismatic leaders are up to twenty times more productive than those who work for bully leaders.

Leadership Lesson 5: Create shared vision to build bridges to the future. According to Barker, it doesn't matter whether your organization is a church or a university, a hospital or a nation—everyone benefits from having a powerful vision of the future. He says that shared vision is the single most powerful component for building bridges to the future. In thinking about vision, it's often helpful to compare the way in which things have worked in the past to how they could work in the future. For example, throughout most of history, a leader created a vision and handed it down to his or her followers. Today, we know that such an approach doesn't work. People are better informed and educated, and they want to use their skills and knowledge to contribute to the vision. Therefore, the new way of thinking about vision recognizes that the larger community or organization needs to create it. Creating the vision together allows for a shared meaning and understanding of the vision by all followers. Perhaps this is the wisdom captured in the African proverb which states, “He who is carried on another's back does not appreciate how far off the town is.”

Finally, I would ask, why do we often suppose that involvement in our communities blurs our identity? Working with the model of hospitality, it certainly doesn't have to. Rather, I believe, it presents an ideal opportunity to enhance identity. Did not Jesus imagine an

alternative world of neighborliness? That was certainly Isaiah's vision, too. You remember what he said in chapter 2, verses 1-4:

“The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

So, in conclusion, I would argue that unless we are involved in the public square, we are not fulfilling our mission as light and salt to those we need to see as our neighbors and guests.