

Good Leadership and Good Management: Why, How, What

John Redmond
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One of the great ironies of many successful religious movements is that they almost always start from failure — from a secular and mainstream point of view. Christianity had its charismatic young leader crucified as a rabble rouser for tipping over the tables in the temple. Christians spent years in intellectual gymnastics explaining how the messiah was born an illegitimate child and killed as a criminal.

The Pilgrim Fathers were driven out of England, as were many of the other colonists who settled in the New World. The Latter Day Saints (Mormons) were driven westward to the American desert to

die, their founder lynched and religion mocked.

Yet these movements found multi-generational success in preaching, modeling and promoting the values and doctrines that gave them fulfillment and improved the culture around them.

This doesn't happen by accident. Successfully attracting and maintaining believers over multiple generations and changing the values of a culture requires a combination of good leadership and good management, and they are not the same thing.

Leadership requires communicating and validating a shared vision to a group of people you may or may not control. Reverend Moon could cast that vision, and many people, even those uncomfortable with his management style, could agree with that large and inclusive ideal and, perhaps more importantly, sense the heart behind it.



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Management is the control of money, processes and people to achieve a desired product or outcome. I've never been impressed with many Unification managers, who mostly mean well, but have little success or training from the real world on which to base their decisions. They mostly default to Theory X management, micro-managing the behavior of their members rather than nurturing their goals, activities and creativity — or they swing to the other side, to religious-based trust and out-of-control management systems. A movement with a great vision but poor management may succeed, but its progress is measured in millennia rather than years.

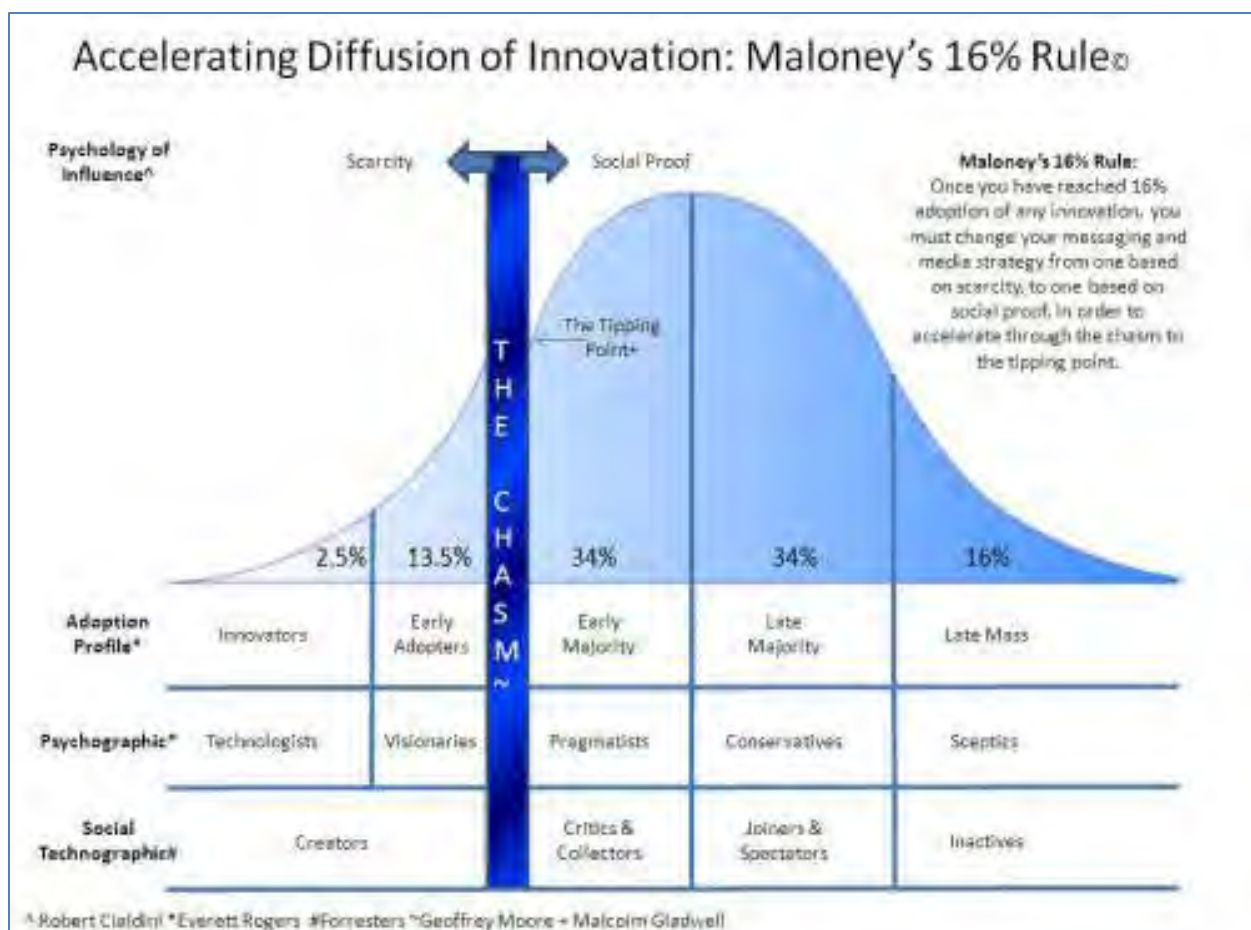
With Rev. Moon ascended to the spirit world, the Unification membership has subdivided into smaller visions. One vision sees Korean hegemony in a monarchy; a second, a global peace-building vision; a third, a hereditary fiefdom; and a number of others follow personality-based shamans. While these are interesting visions, they are not as compelling as Rev. Moon's original vision to liberate God and humankind from evil.

What does it take to have good leadership with a shared vision and professional management in a religious movement?

When you go to TED, the popular Internet "McWisdom" site, you can find among the top tenmost popular talks a presentation by Simon Sinek, who, in 18 minutes, outlines a practical formula for having your ideas dominate the popular culture using a strategy of "Why, How, What." This leads to the common marketing formulation where you convert the early adopters, get buzz in the marketplace, convert the early majority, and reach a tipping point, where everyone will share your point of view or buy your new cellphone.

The recently successful same-sex marriage movement followed that formula, and many people find themselves supporting their agenda without quite understanding why.

Sinek makes the argument that successful promotion involves leadership that can articulate the "Why" question and successfully manage the communication, financial and production challenges that accompany the development of the idea or product. This formula seems uncomplicated, so why is it hard to do?



The 16% Rule is a Diffusion of Innovation theory that uses consumer psychology principles to make the leap from early adopters to the mass market.

Since the death of the Founder, the Unification movement has been reeling from a leadership vacuum. By external measures, the movement would seem destined to fail, and the existing power structure appears mired in competition for power, legitimacy and money. The second generation — those who should be the early adopters — are either in outright rebellion, benign indifference, or damning their elders by faint praise: “I really respect first gens, they meant well and sacrificed a lot.”

The economic foundation that the Founder left is used to promote real estate deals. Church activities are reduced to propaganda events glorifying the Founder using a paid audience or church employees and pensioners.

When Rev. Moon first appealed to young people in the ‘70s and ‘80s, he spoke about the heartache of God and the vision to make a world where evil was removed from the public square and reduced to the effects of bad judgment and accidents. This “Why” was compelling. The “What” was the Divine Principle and Unification Thought, a new formulation of theology and philosophy that overcame many of the limitations of traditional religions and the heartlessness of pure intellectual solutions.

The “How” was public campaigns fueled by Japanese money utilizing American and international missionaries. This strategy allowed a relatively small movement to expose the failures of communism, bring a focus to God-centered marriage and start businesses and families that could support future growth.

This effort broke down in the 1980’s, and competition between factions within the movement led to competition for money and internal prestige instead of real results. The “Why” became “Please True Parents” instead of “Liberate God’s heart;” the “What” became “pay ministers and politicians to attend lavish events;” and, the “How” revolved around internal and external propaganda instead of a search for truth and authentic spiritual growth.

What will it take to change the current downward spiral of the Unification movement?

The first step is the re-emergence of the original shared vision. While Rev. and Mrs. Moon are due extraordinary respect, the purpose of the movement is not to deify them but to emulate their successes. Rev. Moon often spoke about how the children should exceed the parents, not put them on a pedestal. The war to reverse the dominion of evil has many small battles and skirmishes; each one contributes to the final victory. As long as these efforts are aligned with the final goal, there is no need to attack each other over small differences.

The “Why” has to be deep and broad. There’s no reason to aim low, to doctrinal or cultural limits; God loves us all and has a hope for each of us. One of our goals has to be to connect people to that vision and

allow them freedom to build it from their hearts.

The “What” is still the Principle. It is a communications tool to transmit through reason what people can’t yet feel in their hearts. It can have many forms and takes time for people to appreciate. Our current version was originally designed for Korean Christians. One of the strategic mistakes we made is to assume everyone is as interested in the doctrine as the first generation was. In my estimation, only about 5% of any population care about doctrine. They may have a code to live by, or give lip service to the Bible, but in general, the way they live their life is reflected in the people they love.

To communicate effectively, the sender needs to understand the receiver and send a message within the experience of that receiver. That may involve many new expressions of the Divine Principle and Unification Thought.

The “How” is where the most work needs to be done. The Internet has revolutionized communication, yet most of our work is still done on chalkboards. The second generation is in a position to master the tools and techniques of modern communication. Any advance in the vision of the Unification movement will be led by young people who have mastered these tools and can provide thought leadership for the culture.

An intergenerational task force to pioneer this approach to spreading our message would be both visionary and well-aligned with the inherent strengths of American culture.

The Unification movement is not destined to fail. We have tremendous assets and foundations to build on. What is required is a return to the larger vision and the professionalization of the management of the movement. This is within our reach and doesn’t require intervention from God — only humility and effort from His children.

John Redmond is the proud father of four interesting children, and has high expectations for the American Unification movement.

Photo at top: *“Man looking through binoculars”* by *Alexandra Chalkousi*