

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

We will now examine the key literature that has served to shape much of our thinking in this thesis. The first source, Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, along with its companion, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization* are reflected in the methodology and conceptual thinking of this thesis. The second source is Eldin Villafañe's, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* and *Seek The Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. The third source is C. Rene Padilla's book, *Mission Between the Times: Essays On The Kingdom*.

Padilla's and Villafañe's writings inform much of the theological framework of chapter two. Taken together, Senge, Villafañe and Padilla's writings are foundational sources that have shaped our thinking throughout this dissertation.

In addition to these, there are two other subsidiary sources that have influenced this thesis: Jim Collins', *Good to Great* and Patrick Lencioni's, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

Foundational Source One

Foundational Source One: Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* and *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*.

Senge's work is the product of years of research among many of his colleagues and associates. These books are the results of their group working together as a learning team at MIT Sloan School of Business Management. *The Fifth Discipline* is based upon five disciplines: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. Senge emphasizes that these disciplines are not separate, but that they interact with each other. A learning organization may not function properly with only four disciplines, and the fifth discipline, systems thinking, is the glue that ties the other four into one indivisible whole. This thesis looks to discover the indivisible whole of the system in operation in the ministry of TCNE.

In chapter one, we noted that TCNE had developed into three separate ministry systems each with its own board of directors. The autonomy of each TC system was working against the highest purposes of the organization (as a whole system). Rather than working together as one ministry, personal agendas of individual leaders often created an unhealthy spirit of competition and contention. When TCNE reorganized into one ministry system this prepared the way for the exponential growth that was to follow. Let us now reflect upon the five disciplines as they relate to TCNE.

Personal Mastery:

People with a high level of personal mastery share several basic characteristics. They have a special sense of purpose that lies behind their visions and goals. For such a person, a vision is a calling rather than simply a good idea. They see "current reality" as an ally, not an enemy. They have learned how to perceive and work with forces of change rather than resist those forces. They are deeply inquisitive, committed to continually seeing reality more and more accurately. They feel connected to others and to life itself.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1990), 142.

TCNE has experienced a dynamic growth pattern over the last eight years. This has come as a direct result of clarifying and deepening our vision. The leadership team of TCNE has a renewed sense of their highest calling. This came about as we began to work as a learning team examining our ministry. The “current reality” of our ministry needed to be understood if we were to learn from it. For over a ten year period TCNE had not experienced any growth. A high burnout rate among key leaders was one of the symptomatic problems.

Personal Mastery is aspiration for personal development and learning that keeps leadership on a continual journey of learning. Senge speaks about, “An organization’s commitment to and capacity for learning can be no greater than that of its members.”⁶⁶ Personal Mastery is critical for clarifying the things that really matter to us, of living our lives in the service of our highest aspirations.

Mental Models, according to Senge, are the way we see reality. This reality is based upon deeply ingrained assumptions that influence how we understand the world. It is critical for TCNE to reflect on how we understand what we do as a ministry. The inherent danger of any organization is to stop thinking about what they are doing. Our mental models influence us profoundly. In Chapter two of this thesis, I challenged the mental model that was influencing TC leadership to buy a farm for the training phase of the ministry. The Founding Director of the first TC farm, Rev. Frank Reynolds, writes in his book, “*If we could just get them away from this scene (Brooklyn NY) and teach them how to live the Christian lifestyle, we knew that they, (inner city kids), would be able to*

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7.

*make it. As the Board discussed this we decided a farm somewhere would be the ideal place.”*⁶⁷

This mental model has a systemic flaw to it. Discipleship training should be contextualized to the social reality of the individual. The army would not consider training its soldiers to fight a war in the desert by sending them to the Amazon rain forest. Yet TC decided to buy a farm to train city kids how to live the Christian life. This model has been replicated in many other countries around the world. Once a model like this is established as “the way it should be done” it’s very difficult to challenge.

According to Senge, organizations become prisoners to their way of thinking. The mental model is so deeply entrenched in the culture of the organization that it becomes very difficult to challenge. Mental models need to be exposed and challenged rigorously. Personal mastery and working with mental models go hand in hand. They deal with the way people think about what they do. Senge says, “People with high levels of personal mastery are more committed. They take more initiative. They have a broader and deeper sense of responsibility in their work. They learn faster.”⁶⁸

TCNE has developed its own leadership training program to recruit and train our graduates for leadership in our ministry. This has empowered our ministry by creating what Senge refers to as ***building shared vision***. “*If any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it’s the capacity to hold a shared picture of*

⁶⁷ Frank Reynolds with Joan Kruger, *Is There a God?* (Lenexa: 3CrossPublishing, 2006), 64.

⁶⁸ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1990), 143.

the future we seek to create.”⁶⁹ This is only accomplished when there is a commitment to *team learning*. TCNE has grown beyond what any of us could have dreamed when we reorganized eight years ago. For over a decade, survival for another year was the vision. To have a vision to grow and expand was inconceivable. What was lacking was a shared vision embraced by a leadership team.

The essence of a learning organization is team learning. “To the Greeks *dia-logos* meant a free flowing of meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually.”⁷⁰ In this regard, Senge poses a question, “How can a team of committed managers with individual IQ’s above 120 have a collective IQ of 63?”⁷¹ The point here is that we need to rediscover the art of collective thinking. Collective learning and management is a natural function found in primitive cultures, like the American Indian. It requires a high level of humility to be able to dialogue about problems (current reality) openly. Senge says that the discipline of dialogue has been almost entirely lost in modern society. Dialogue requires the discipline of patience and the willingness to suspend assumptions and enter into a free flowing genuine “thinking together” (this was a typical scene in the old western movies depicting an Indian pow wow).

This requires a shift in the way many organizations function. It’s amazing to me that Senge speaks about *metanoia*, the Greek word used in the New Testament for repent. He speaks about *metanoia* as it relates to the process of becoming a learning

⁶⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁷¹ Ibid., 9.

organization. To grasp the meaning of *metanoia* is to grasp the deeper meaning of “learning,” for learning also requires a fundamental shift or movement of mind. He goes on to say that through learning we re-create ourselves and become able to do something we were never were able to do. Through learning we extend our capacity to create, to be part of the generative process of life.⁷²

TCNE has been able to re-create itself as an organization. There is an excitement about what we will be able to do next. This reflects the *metanoia* that Senge is speaking about. It has generated in our organization the capacity to dream big. We have already seen what was a dream eight years ago become reality. We have not arrived, we know that we are not perfect, yet we believe that God is leading us to forcefully advance His Kingdom and even the gates of hell won’t stop us.

The fifth discipline is *systems thinking*. This is the glue that ties personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning all together. This is the framework used throughout this thesis. In chapter two we looked to establish a systemic theology for our ministry practices. Senge says, “If you cut an elephant in half you don’t get two small elephants”. Living systems have integrity. Their character depends on the whole. TCNE had cut the elephant into eight pieces!

Each department of the ministry had become the domain of its leader. There was the fundraising department, the discipleship department, the vocational training department, the public relations department, the counseling department, the evangelism department, the food service department and the administration department. There wasn’t a shared vision that connected all departments together into one elephant.

⁷² Ibid.,14.

In chapters one and two we described everything we do as a part of one ministry. We now say that TCNE is one ministry in seven different states and in 15 different locations. Every department is as important as the rest because we can't function without it. I'm not claiming that we've created a utopia void of conflict. In fact, systems thinking has given us a new lens to see conflict not as an enemy but as an ally.

We are learning that *metanoia* has many applications, both individually and corporately. In chapter two we spoke about how social structures and institutions have moral values embedded in them. They can be good or evil. Sin, in a fallen world, acts upon institutions and individuals. TCNE recognizes that we must create a safe environment where repentance can work effectively. One of the laws of systems thinking is *that there is no blame*. Senge says, "We tend to blame outside circumstances for our problems. Systems thinking shows us there is no outside; that you and the cause of your problems are part of a single system. The cure lies in your relationship with your enemy."⁷³

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook speaks about the need for organizations to become communities. In a related way, in chapter two of this thesis we looked at *koinonia* as the community of the Spirit, which is the environment that TCNE must operate in to do its ministry. A community where needs are met through relationships is an environment where authentic Christian *koinonia* can thrive.

⁷³ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1990), 67.

Doug Hall refers to ministries becoming like a “toaster” when they lose this organic dynamic of community. We also noted how *koinonia* is one of the four missiological pillars in Pauline theology.

Building community in organizations and corporations is a process. Senge identifies six core processes essential for creating and sustaining organizations as communities. He calls them the “C” words. They involve processes, for enhancing *Capability, Commitment, Contribution, Continuity, Collaboration, and Conscience*. In chapter five we will explore each of these processes as it relates to TCNE. As TCNE continues to grow and develop it is even more imperative that we keep a sharp focus on building community.

Foundational Sources Two and Three

Foundational Sources Two and Three: Eldin Villafañe’s *The Liberating Spirit Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* and *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry* and C. Rene Padilla’s *Mission Between the Times: Essays On The Kingdom*.

The writings of Villafañe and Padilla are foundational sources that have influenced and shaped both chapter one and chapter two of this thesis. In chapter one, we looked at how evangelical ministries have sometimes become “converted” to secular social organizations; ministries born in the passion and fire of the Spirit but having since lost their distinctive Kingdom flavor. How did they lose the gospel of Jesus Christ from which they were born? Villafañe speaks of the *mystery of iniquity: the texture of social existence*.

The nature of spiritual warfare is within the framework of the ongoing cosmic conflict between God and Satan, and the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, that any discussion of sin, particularly in its powerful and mysterious (secret) structural or institutional manifestations must be set.⁷⁴

It is within this context that we recognize that our struggle is not against flesh and blood rather there are principalities and powers working to prevent the Kingdom of God from advancing. According to Villafañe,

understanding the mystery of iniquity means that sin and evil go beyond the individual; that we are all enmeshed in a social living that is complex, dynamic, and dialectical; and that our spirituality, and the very gospel that we preach, needs to be as big and ubiquitous as sin and evil. We will falter in our spirituality and thus grieve the Spirit if “our struggle with evil” does not “correspond to the geography of evil”.⁷⁵

In chapter two we examined the challenge for evangelicals to comprehend the social aspects of sin and spirituality. The tendency for many is to see this struggle too individualistically and not see that the spiritual warfare must correspond to the geography of evil. Padilla illustrates this point by commenting that,

The lack of appreciation of the broader dimensions of the gospel leads inevitably to the misunderstanding of the mission of the church. The result is an evangelism that regards the individual as a self-contained unit – a Robinson Crusoe to whom God’s call is addressed as to one on an island - whose salvation takes place exclusively in terms of a relationship with God. It is not seen that the individual does not exist in isolation, and consequently that it is not possible to speak of salvation with no reference to the world of which he is a part.⁷⁶

In the genesis of TC, the leadership chose to buy a farm in order to get the students out of the city. This effort to improve their discipleship training reflects a

⁷⁴ Eldin Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁶ Rene C. Padilla, *Missions Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 1.

theology deficient of social spirituality. TC discipleship must be contextualized to the social reality of the city because that's where the men are returning to. If we remove the inner city from the discipleship context and replace it with a rural farm context that changes everything. Related to this, Padilla argues for the contextualization of the gospel in terms of churches (and TCNE) that incarnate the gospel in their own individual cultures and thereby collectively generate an evangelical theology that overcomes cultural barriers and reflects the many sided wisdom of God.⁷⁷ Likewise, Villafañe challenges the Church to engage in spiritual warfare to confront the principalities and powers of the city, not to run from it. TCNE has established ministries in the inner city so that we can be a relevant prophetic witness in the culture of the city.

Villafañe and Padilla are primary sources for the theological construct on the doctrine of Kingdom of God in chapter two of this thesis. They both emphasize the corporate nature of the Kingdom, which we have applied to the ministry of TCNE. Villafañe's paradigm of the Kingdom as a culture of peace and his outline of the classical missiological categories of the Church's mission have been applied to the ministry of TCNE in advancing the Kingdom of God.⁷⁸

In chapter two we looked at the cost of discipleship. Padilla makes a powerful observation about a gospel being preached around the world that reflects no demands.

The image of a Christian projected by some forms of United States Christianity is that of a successful businessman who has found the formula for happiness, a formula he wants to share with others freely. The Gospel becomes a type of merchandise (for free consumers) the acquisition of which guarantees to the consumer the highest values – success in life and

⁷⁷ Ibid., 84.

⁷⁸ Eldin Villafañe, *A Prayer for the City* (Washington: Library of Congress, 2001), 11.

personal happiness now and forever. The act of “accepting Christ” is the means to reach the ideal of “the good life” at no cost. The cross has lost its offense, since it simply points to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us but does not present the call to discipleship. The God of this type of Christianity is the God of “Cheap Grace.” The God who constantly gives but never demands; the God fashioned expressly for mass-man, who is controlled by the law of least possible effort and seeks easy solutions; the God who gives his attention to those who will not reject him because they need him as an analgesic.⁷⁹

TCNE recognizes that the salvation is offered to us as a free gift, but that does not mean it is cheap or was purchased without great cost. Indeed, we cannot earn salvation by our good works, nor can we buy it with silver or gold, but scripture does teach us that we have been “bought with a price” and that our life is not our own (Matthew 10: 37-39; Mark 8: 34-35; Luke 9: 23-24). The demands of Christ to his followers require that we must deny ourselves and take up our cross daily.

Perhaps another way to say it is that although salvation is offered to us as a precious free gift, discipleship is costly. Scripture is clear, if we want to be a follower of Christ we must all deny our personal rights of self determination and follow the example of Christ who prayed to the father not my will but thy will be done.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12: 1-2)

The image Paul uses here is that of a sacrificial altar. We must die in order to live. The cost of salvation is a life for a life. 2 Corinthians 5:11-15, Galatians 2:20 In order to find life you must lose it. If you hold on to your life, you won't enter the

⁷⁹ Rene C. Padilla, *Missions Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eeremans Publishing Company, 1985), 1.

Kingdom. Jesus said, in order to find your life you must be willing to loose it for the sake of the Kingdom. He also stated, that in the last days his followers would be victorious by the word of their testimony- that they loved not their own lives even unto death. “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (Revelation 12:11).

The cosmic battle of the ages is the context that Jesus refers to in Matthew 11:12, “*From the days of John the Baptist till now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*” TCNE understands its mission is to be a part of God’s army to forcefully advance the Reign of God. As Rene Padilla states,

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a personal message, it reveals a God who calls each of his own by name. But it is also a cosmic message; it reveals a God whose purpose includes the whole world. It is not addressed to the individual *per se* but to the individual as a member of the old humanity in Adam, marked by sin and death, whom God calls to be integrated into the new humanity in Christ, marked by righteousness and eternal life.⁸⁰

TCNE is a ministry that offers the benefits of the Reign of God to all who come to our doors seeking help. The life of a drug addict depicts despair and hopelessness. The gospel offers hope, in this life, for the addict to be liberated from addiction (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I agree with Padilla when he states, *it’s not to the individual per se but only as he’s integrated into the new humanity in Christ.* TCNE is a Kingdom ministry; we are all part of this new community, *koinonia*, of the Spirit. The leadership of TCNE understands

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.

our mission on earth is temporal but our purpose is eternal. We are living between the times, the Kingdom is here now, but the full consummation of the Reign will occur when Christ returns again. Until Christ returns in all of his power and glory, TCNE, as a part of the world wide church of the Lord Jesus Christ, still have a war to be fought, to forcefully advance His Kingdom. TCNE is challenged to develop and cultivate the values of the Kingdom. This will increase our capacity to prophetically model the Reign of God in TCNE and through TCNE to the world.

As Villafañe says,

While the Church is not the reign of God, yet, as the community of the Spirit - where the Spirit manifests itself in a unique and particular way (Rom. 8:23; 1Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:14-18) - it has the purpose to both reflect and witness to the values of the reign, by the power of the Spirit to the world.⁸¹

Subsidiary Literature Sources

Subsidiary Literature Sources: *Good to Great* and *The Five Dysfunctions of a*

Team. There are numerous subsidiary sources that have influenced this thesis, all of which are noted in the bibliography. Especially influential and challenging have been several books dealing with leadership, and among these two stand out in particular: Jim Collins' *Good to Great* and Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. These books reinforce many of the precepts of Systems Thinking in very specific ways.

Good to Great is an exhaustive research project of publicly traded companies. Collins and his research team spent five years and a total of 15,000 hours studying companies that made a leap from good to great results. The final cut of companies that

⁸¹ Eldin Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 25.

made the final list attained extraordinary results. These companies maintained, from their transition point, cumulative stock returns 6.9 times the general market over a fifteen year period. To put this in perspective, a \$1 investment in a good-to-great company would multiply 471 times, compared to a 56 fold increase in the general market.⁸²

This research team models what Senge calls a “learning organization”. They practiced the art of dialogue as they wrestled with their findings, challenging their own assumptions (mental models).

So, early in the project, I kept insisting, ignore the executives! But the research team kept pushing back, No! There is something consistently unusual about them. We can't ignore them. And I'd respond, but the comparison companies also had leaders, even some great leaders. So, what's the difference? Back and forth the debate raged. Finally...as should always be the case...the data won.⁸³

The data or facts unfortunately don't always win out in organizations. Often times, politics or power tripping egos will dominate the outcome of a meeting. I refer again to the question posed by Senge, “How can a team of committed managers with individual IQ's above 120 have a collective IQ of 63?” This occurs when the individuals are not functioning as a team. Team learning or collective learning is a skill that many are not well adept at. Patrick Lencioni's book identifies five dysfunctions that hinder team work. These five dysfunctions will prevent an organization (or ministry) from functioning as a learning organization.

⁸² Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), 3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 22.

1. **Lack of trust:** Team members that are not willing to be vulnerable within the group.
2. **Fear of conflict:** Failure to build trust creates teams that are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas.
3. **Lack of commitment:** without open and passionate debate team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions.
4. **Avoidance of accountability:** without having real buy in by the team members, people are hesitant to call their peers on actions that seem counterproductive to the good of the team.
5. **Inattention to results:** personal agendas, egos, self interest are put before what's best for the team.⁸⁴

Collins' team identified a very specific profile of the CEOs that were leading each company when it made the transition from good to great. They called it “**Level 5 Leadership**” and were shocked by their discovery, because this type of leadership contradicted the idea (mental model) of the lone ranger hero type who comes riding in on his white horse to save the day.

Compared to the high profile leaders with big personalities who make headlines and become celebrities, the good to great leaders seem to have come from mars. Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy, these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. They are ambitious, to be sure, but ambitious first and foremost for the company, not themselves. In contrast, two thirds of the comparison companies had leaders with gargantuan personal egos that contributed to the demise or continued mediocrity of the company.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 188

⁸⁵ Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), 39.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of this “Level 5 Leadership.” His teachings on leadership, model for every ministry, what Collins team discovered about these CEOs. These leaders transitioned their companies to greatness in a manner that Christian leaders would do well to emulate. Our leadership should be focused on serving the Lord and others in order to advance the Kingdom of God. It’s evident from *Good to Great* that these character qualities have produced extraordinary results in the world of business. They also have application for TCNE leadership. Our leadership needs to cultivate within our organization these same qualities if we hope to become a great organization which is fulfilling its highest call to forcefully advance the Reign of God. “*First who...then what*” is another concept discovered by Collins’ team. This concept speaks about the type of people that contribute to making companies transition from being good to becoming great. Collins says it’s not **how** you pay that makes the difference, it’s **who** you pay that makes the difference. For example, Collins’ research found no systematic pattern linking executive compensation to the process of going from good to great.

The eleven good to great CEOs are some of the most remarkable CEOs of the century, given that only eleven companies from the fortune 500 met the exacting standards for entry into this study. Yet, despite their remarkable results, almost no one ever remarked about them! These men were the type of leaders that Collins describes as follows:

Level 5 leaders look out the window to apportion credit to factors outside themselves when things go well (and if they can’t find a specific person or event to give credit to, they credit good luck). At the same time, they look in the mirror to apportion responsibility, never blaming bad luck when things go poorly.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), 35.

This type of leadership reflects what Senge describes for the new leadership needed today, leaders that interpret their vision and leadership as a stewardship. This produces the capacity for building great teams of individuals united by and committed to a shared vision, a high calling, for purposes beyond their individual benefit. Quoting Senge,

It brings a unique depth of meaning to his vision, a larger landscape upon which his personal dreams and goals stand out as landmarks on a longer journey. It enobles his efforts, yet leaves an abiding humility (Level 5 leadership) that keeps him from taking his own successes and failures too seriously.⁸⁷

Lencioni, Collins, and Senge are all saying the same things about developing and growing extraordinary organizations that will produce extraordinary results. These organizations are made of people, complex social systems, and their writings cohere to the principles and precepts embedded in Scripture. These are universal concepts and principles that have powerful and effective strategies for mobilizing the multitudes in any human endeavor.

We have looked at the foundational and subsidiary sources that have influenced and shaped the writing of this thesis. More importantly to me is that these sources have provided the TCNE ministry a foundation to look at our mission and ministry and recognize the potential that we have to make a significant impact in our communities and around the world. TCNE is committed to play a role in the cosmic battle of the ages. To be a part of the great world wide army of God. Until the trumpet sounds TCNE will

⁸⁷ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1990), 346.

follow our commander and chief, Jesus Christ, into battle, to forcefully advance the rule and Reign of God.