

## Core Values

Five core values are embedded in all aspects of the Initiative's curriculum. They underscore the importance of *being* one's best as the necessary foundation for *doing* one's best. Research has identified the importance of purpose, character and clearly-defined core values as the necessary foundation for sustained, effective leadership. Core values are the compass by which the leader steers. Significant time is devoted to these core values in the First National Conference. In addition, the core values are reinforced throughout the program, and are the primary focus of the mentor meetings.

### The five core values are:

**Accountability** – Effective leaders regularly seek feedback and guidance from trusted sources. Participants are encouraged to know themselves more fully through personal reflection, open sharing, and supportive accountability relationships. The writer of Hebrews captured the essence of accountability in Heb. 10:24-25 (NIV). Too often busyness of ministry makes it difficult to maintain these critically important relationships, and we lose the benefit of both the encouragement and correction they offer.

Accountability relations, including mentoring, coaching, and peer review, are increasingly popular – and important – components of leadership development programs in business, government, non-profit organizations and ministry. Such relationships

are established and nurtured throughout the Initiative through three primary means. First, the participants are members of a local learning community – a group of peers who support each other's learning. Second, the participants meet every other month for local group dialogues, which provide opportunities for regular check-ins with each other. Finally, participants meet monthly with carefully selected mentors who help them reflect on what they are learning, particularly in relation to the five core values. Through these means, and supplemented by ongoing journaling, participants learn the value of feedback from others, a rich learning resource, and identify which approaches work best for them.

**Balance** – Effective leaders understand the importance of living a balanced life and are concerned with the development of the whole person. Participants learn how to identify their priorities, examine their use of time, and develop personal growth plans.

The scriptural basis for the concept of balance is provided in the familiar dialogue between Jesus and one of the teachers that were often in his audience... “One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear o Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and

with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:28-31 (NIV) The question is, “How can one love the Lord with all – and each – part of their being if they ignore the development of some of those parts?” At other points, scripture describes Godly leaders as people who attend to their families and other important relationships, who care for their physical selves, and who live with moderation. Balanced living is seen as a means to Godly living.

**Interdependence** – Effective leaders are effective collaborators, aware of the rich resources present in their organizations and communities. Participants are challenged to identify those resources, build healthy partnerships, and work closely with others. There is no place for competition – or stubborn individualism – when it comes to the work of Kingdom building. Nowhere is this more clearly stated than by Paul in his well-known description of the Body of Christ... “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.” I Cor. 12:12 (NIV)

Interdependence is taught as a core value and reinforced as a key principle of effective leadership in all the training events. Participants are encouraged to affirm the unique contributions of others – both individuals and organizations – with whom they

can partner in working to achieve common objectives.

**Empowerment** – Effective leaders recognize the importance of bringing out the best in others. Participants learn how to identify others' strengths, vary their leadership style, and implement appropriate strategies to develop the talents of those around them.

An important prerequisite to empowering others is to understand how to identify and develop each individual's special talents, style, and motivational needs, beginning with one's own. Numerous opportunities are provided throughout the program to gain insight into this, as participants are challenged to rethink their roles as leaders in relation to the others with whom they work. As we see in Ephesians 4, for example, there is more to this than simply delegating responsibility to others. One must also pass along the knowledge and skills required to succeed in those assignments, as Paul highlighted in his instructions to his best-known protégé, Timothy... "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." 2 Tim. 2:2 (NIV) For this reason we provide participants with a Training Toolkit at the conclusion of each training event, to facilitate the process of sharing what they have learned with others.

**Leverage** – effective leaders know how to use the positive potential of change, knowing that seemingly small actions can

have significant impact. Participants are encouraged to seek out strategic opportunities to create healthy, sustainable change.

Throughout the program, participants are challenged to re-think their long-established ways of thinking and acting. Some key focal points of this are their understanding of ministry, leadership and community, each of which is examined in depth to reveal the complex interrelationships that must be understood in order to achieve maximum effectiveness. This brings insights into how seemingly small changes in a system can produce large – and often unintended – consequences, but also how one can put this principle to work proactively to bring about desired system level change.

The core values provide a framework with which participants can reflect on important truths about the life and ministry of a leader. Participants are encouraged to make the Psalmist's plea the cry of their own hearts, "Test me, O LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth." Ps 26:2-4 (NIV) The fruit of this search will be deeper insight into what drives their own behavior, and a wealth of opportunities for engaging in deep change.