

Post-colonial leadership?

The challenges facing a new generation of theologians¹

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Abstract

In South Africa we are living in a postcolonial context. The question is whether we can speak about post-colonial leadership, the reason for the question mark in the title. After questioning and interrogating concepts like colonialism, postcolonialism and decolonization we will look at some of the major challenges we as theologians and religious leaders are facing in South Africa and we will try to see whether there are parallels in the Netherlands. Some of the challenges we will examine include ecological, socio-political, economical, educational, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and also spiritual challenges. We as faith leaders do have to respond to these challenges and therefore I will look at different leadership competencies for a new generation of theologians. Competencies that will enable us to react to the challenges in responsible ways helping our congregants to flourish in a highly competitive world.

1. Bedankings

Geagte Rektor, prof Mechteld Jansen, vergun my eers 'n paar woorde in Afrikaans wat ek lang.....saam sal uitspreek. Afrikaans is natuurlik die jongste taal van Afrika. Die taal is slegs 130 jaar jonk. Hierdie elegante taal, wat 'n vermenging van Nederlands, Duits, Frans en Kreools is, selfs met invloede van Maleisië, is my moedertaal. Soos julle weet, word dit nie deur almal in ons land ewe veel waardeer nie, aangesien dit deur sommige gesien word as die taal van die kolonialiste, die taal van die onderdrukker en die taal van apartheid. Maar dit bly steeds my moedertaal, die taal waarin ek dink, droom en bid en wat deur ongeveer 14% van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking daagliks gebruik word, wat neerkom op 8 miljoen mense (die helfte van die Nederlandse bevolking).

Dit bring my by enkele woorde van dank in hierdie mooi taal, so nou verwant aan Nederlands, dat julle my waarskynlik baie goed kan volg. Allereers, my opregte dank aan prof Mechteld Jansen vir die vriendelike uitnodiging om hierdie lesing waar te neem. Ek beskou dit as 'n besondere eer en voorreg, opreg bedankt. Tweedens aan my gasheer, vriend en kollega dr Rein Brouwer wat my as "research fellow" uitgenooi het. Derdens aan Albert Nijboer wat verantwoordelik was vir die praktiese reëlings en die uitstaande verblyf in Amstelveen. Vierdens aan ander emeriti, alumni, kollegas, vriende en studente wat hier is en

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dus aan julle as gehoor, baie dankie dat julle die moeite gedoen het om na een Zuid-Afrikaner te kom luister.

Now I will switch over to the language of the Empire, as was requested, for the sake of international scholars, but also for your own sake. But, I do have to warn you, I am speaking English with a Stellenbosch-dialect, that part of our country where I work, pray and play under the South African sun.

2. Autobiographical

I want to start off by telling you something about myself, not to put myself on the forefront, but to help you better understand my position in the world of academia and especially in the context in which I teach practical theology, my positionality in other words. I am a descendant of the French Huguenots who had to flee for their lives because of the Catholic persecution in seventeenth century France some 330 years ago. Only one Nell-family came to South Africa. Guillaume Nell and his wife Jeanne la Batte, came from Rouen in France as refugees in 1691 on the ship, *De Schelde* that departed from Texel. Like most French Huguenots, he was a wine farmer and settled on the farm Blaauwklippen just outside Stellenbosch. The Nell's, like all Huguenots, soon assimilated with the Dutch colonists and you will find them throughout South Africa today. I still have to put in a land claim on the Blaauwklippen-property, in light of all the land claims that are taking place in our country.

My background and descent make me a colonist, fare and square. But, the Afrikaner people have also been colonized. At the end of the 18th century, by the British Empire at the battle of Blaauwberg, and again a hundred years later during the Anglo-Boer war, where thousands of women and children died in concentration camps. I also lived for 33 years under apartheid and my father was a staunch supporter of the Nationalist Party up to his untimely death 30 years ago. I started as a minister the year that President Nelson Mandela was released from prison, that was 1990. And I started 12 years ago to teach practical theology at the Faculty of Theology, where I fully identify with the difficult study and living conditions of my BCI-students (Black, Coloured and Indian). Currently they form 70% of our student population.

I therefore move between these different worlds of white, brown and black, and congregations with similar colours, finding myself continuously in a paradoxical space of

liminality. A liminal or threshold space, an unsettling space but also a dynamic and fluid space full of movement and vibrancy. One could say, a typical post-colonial space!

3. Postcolonial leadership?

This brings me to the first part of the title of my presentation “postcolonial leadership?”. It was deliberately written with a question mark. Personally, I do not think there is such a thing as “postcolonial leadership”, but rather it is a case of leadership in a postcolonial context, with South Africa of course as a case in point. What we must therefore try to determine is: Firstly, what is meant by colonialism, after which we will also understand postcolonialism better, and secondly, what are the challenges that this context poses to theological leadership? As we always say to each other in our academic work, there is a lot of contestation about the concepts of colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonization etc.

Colonialism can be described as a force that continues to marginalize the most vulnerable citizens for the benefit and economic wealth of the least vulnerable. Some critics even consider globalization as contributing to colonialism. You will know South Africa is considered to be one of the most unequal societies, if not the most unequal, in the whole world. Postcolonialism, however, “denotes a time that historically follows many movements toward independence of former colonies. It also criticizes novel forms of colonialism that endure. Among other forms of destruction, historical colonialism organized nations and peoples into hierarchical relationships of dominance and oppression” (Sharp 2012:422).

Post-colonial studies, as an inter-disciplinary field of study, are therefore in line with the postmodern suspicion of grand narratives that glorify inequality and conceal colonial practices. In postcolonial studies in theology we go even further and emphasize the importance of diverse involvement through the unmasking of norms that still oppress people and disregard their potential participation. With this, of course, comes the drive towards decolonization of the curriculum that gained momentum since the student unrests and the uprising of the so-called #fallist-movements towards the end of 2015.

Under decolonization I do not understand the destruction of Western knowledge, but its decentering. It would then become one way of knowing rather than *the* way of knowing. It makes possible the creation of new knowledge spaces (Le Grange 2016:1). But we must also understand that decolonization is also a very personal thing that plays out in one’s own

identity. I am continuously questioning myself, my colonized mind, especially when I am here in the Netherlands.

4. Challenges for theological leadership

It is within this postcolonial context that my colleagues and I participate in teaching and cultivating a new generation of theological leadership. And we continuously ask ourselves how well do we prepare our graduates for the 21st Century, for the so-called VUCA-world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous)? In this regard we do have to take the comment of Tencer (2017) serious when he states that “eighty five percent of jobs that will exist in 2030 haven’t been invented yet”. We therefore have to prepare our students and graduates for a world that’s essentially not possible to prepare them for. In preparing our students for these professions that don’t exist we do have the further responsibility to help them to understand the different challenges they are presently facing.

In the middle of Stellenbosch, one finds a little hill, known as Papegaaiberg (Parrot mountain if you want to translate it directly). It is identified as Papegaaiberg because when the first Dutch governor and colonist of the Cape, Simon van der Stel, came to visit the town towards the end of the 17th century, he and his fellow colonizers used to have a day on which they hunted the parrots in the trees, accompanied by a lot of festivities. It was also after Van der Stel that the town was named. Van der Stel’s bosch = is Stellenbosch.

Every year I take my students up the little hill of Papegaaiberg to give them some exercise and fresh air, but also a lesson in geography and theology. I believe it is only when you get some height, a bird’s eye view in other words, that you start to understand the many “postcolonial” challenges we are facing. Let’s call it a “geo-theological approach” to practical theology. Standing on top of the little hill one observes different visible signs of various kinds. I try to help the students to understand the different challenges a practical theologian is facing through interpreting these signs alongside them.

Now I know it might be difficult for you finding a little hill, let alone a mountain, in the Netherlands, but I do hope that you can imagine yourself standing next to me, and even maybe, identify similar challenges in your own context. I can only speak from my context.

5. Challenges facing theological leadership in South Africa

The *first sign* that strikes one, is the beauty of the surrounding mountains and vineyards. The beautiful blue Jonkershoek Mountains in the background and the clear stream of water from the Eersterivier reminds one of paradise. This picture is further enhanced by the green vineyards of Stellenbosch's wine and fruit farms in the valleys and hills underneath. However, the beauty of this ecological view is a paradox. On the one hand it makes one aware of the wonder of God's creation, the gift of nature, of clean air, of water and of the agricultural products we need for food security and survival.² On the other hand we know how vulnerable nature is. The same current of water from the Eersterivier that originates high up in the Jonkershoek Mountains is, according to experts, one of the most toxic rivers when it reaches the foot of Papegaaiberg because of pollution from industries.³ The challenges flowing from this sign one can call the *ecological challenges* and they are enormous if the population growth and the impact of the consumer culture are kept in mind. Just last month we received the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and we read how vulnerable our planet is.⁴

The *second sign* that I point out is when one looks down from the beauty of nature to people's culture in the form of housing. One becomes painfully aware of the remnants of the apartheid legislation still so clearly visible in the residential areas below. The first thing one notices is the galvanized iron constructions of the informal housing, the squatters houses of the residents of Kayamandi, with mainly black people living there. The lack of infrastructure in the form of roads, electricity and sewerage is clearly visible. In this area there are serious housing shortages.

On the other side of the road one finds rows of houses that are more formal housing in a place called Cloetesville, with good infrastructure, where mostly brown people live who were moved, due to the group areas act during the 60s and 70s, from the central part of Stellenbosch. If one looks to the opposite side of the town in the direction of the Eersterivier and to the south of the town, it strikes one that the houses are much bigger, the infrastructure is well developed and the green of trees makes the houses almost invisible. Mainly white

² For a disconcerting report on the state of the Eersterivier, visit: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=858>

³ Du Preez (2014) did an insightful and extensive analysis in which he places several of South Africa's socio-economic problems over the past 20 years under the spotlight.

⁴ See website: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srccl/>

people and some of the richest people in South Africa live in these residential areas. Some of these families have accumulated their wealth over centuries and others were successful in other parts of the country and recently moved to Stellenbosch. The challenges that flow from this sign one can call the *ethno-political challenges*.

A *third visible sign* one finds in the business center of Stellenbosch with the large white buildings and expansive parking area of the British Atlantic Tobacco Company (BAT), which was recently sold to the Medi-Clinic Group. It is general knowledge that one of South Africa's greatest entrepreneurs, Anton Rupert, was the founder of this company. BAT not only still employs thousands of people, but its influence also reaches across the globe in terms of its products and capital investment. As is often the case with these kinds of companies in a neoliberal capitalist free-market economy, the profits made by the company cause ever growing gaps between the rich and the poor. According to experts, South Africa has the largest gap between rich and poor people in the world. This unequal distribution of income contributes to the *economic challenges* leadership is facing.

The red roofs of various school buildings and the Stellenbosch University are *the fourth clearly visible sign* from the top of the hill. In this town there is not only some of the best schools in the country, but also a tertiary institution that can be regarded as one of the best universities on the African continent. In a certain sense these institutions form the heartbeat of Stellenbosch as educational center with approximately 40 000 full-time students studying annually at the schools, university and colleges in the town. Unfortunately, there are also enormous differences in terms of education and the access it provides to tertiary education in particular. The quality of education for children growing up in a place such as Kayamandi, varies greatly from the mainly white schools such as Paul Roos Gymnasium, where children receive high-quality education, but at high costs to their parents. The difference in the quality of education between the schools in the various residential areas has a direct impact on admission to tertiary education and is a direct consequence of the history of unequal education. One social commentator even speaks in this regard of the so-called undeclared war on our children, when he reflects on the way in which the *educational challenges* in our country were addressed over the past 25 years.ⁱ

The towers of various churches are visible in various places in the town and are *the fifth sign* I normally point towards. It is especially the tower of the Stellenbosch Dutch Reformed

Mother Church that is the most prominent. A few meters from there one can see the highest tree in Stellenbosch, a Norfolk pine from Australian origin. This tree stands on the grounds of the Faculty of Theology, the only remaining theological faculty in the southern part of the country. Churches and places of worship represent value-driven institutions. These are the places where God is worshipped, but they are also the places where people socialize, and where ethics and values are assimilated and practiced, albeit along racial lines. If one keeps in mind that 80% of South Africa's population indicated in the last census that they belong to the Christian faith, one finds it astonishing that we are confronted with such enormous *ethical and moral challenges* in our country. Here one immediately thinks of corruption, criminality, crime, rape, violence against women and so forth.

While one stands on top of Papegaaiberg, one finds oneself literally in the shade of a radio-telephone tower. Against the mast of this tower are a wide variety of panels that belong to different cellphone and internet companies. All of this points to *the sixth and final sign* with the arrival of the world of cyber-physical systems, big data, artificial intelligence, the internet of things that are busy changing the world radically. This is the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and if one looks down on the streets of Stellenbosch, one sees the red and white ribbons everywhere cordoning off excavations alongside roads. These excavations are done for the instalment of high-fiber optic cables to increase the capacity of the electronic media. Most people are simply lost without cellphones, laptops and an internet connection. One cannot imagine a world without it anymore. Our dependency on these modes of communication also gives enormous power to the persons in charge of these networks. From this sign one becomes aware of the enormous *electronic and cyber-physical challenges* that the 4IR are posing.

6. Competencies and CBTE

After explaining something about the challenges a new generation of theologians are facing in our SA context, we are in the position to define some competencies that we need to address these challenges. But first, something about competencies and why I think it is important for a new generation of theologians.

Competencies can be broadly defined as: “a combination of cognitive, affective, motivational, volitional and social dispositions that form the basis for performance” (Shavelson, 2010). “Competencies are understood as trait dispositions that are relatively

stable over time and across situations, while changes can be induced by different dynamic components” (SU overarching co-curriculum competency framework – draft document).

The purpose and task of theological training is to educate and equip theological students with the necessary skills and competencies to empower other believers to participate in the mission of God and the Church. Competency based theological education takes this challenge seriously. “Competency-based theological education represents a paradigm shift in theological education. It offers an innovative way for seminaries and learning networks to raise a new generation of proven leaders, trained in context, in the knowledge, in the skills, and in the character traits they need to prosper in their callings” (Brown 2016:2). From this it is clear that CBTE is an approach to developing academic programs where the focus is on the competencies rather than the time spent in classrooms. Students illustrate and demonstrate their skills and knowledge by participating in learning experiences, activities and exercises where there is an alignment with well-defined learning outcomes.

| Meta-categories | Competencies | Description |
|--|------------------------|--|
| <i>Core competencies</i> (Priest) | Symbolic | <u>Representing and mediating</u> the Sacred to the followers and celebrating the community’s culture and identity |
| | Spiritual | <u>Living</u> an authentic and transparent spiritual life by embodying the community’s identity and empower and inspire followers to live similarly |
| | Hermeneutical | <u>Interpreting</u> the religious tradition to engage followers in experiencing its relevance in daily life |
| <i>Competencies inside</i> (King) | Pastoral | <u>Caring</u> for the spiritual needs of followers to foster belonging to the community and its traditions |
| | Visionary | <u>Mobilizing</u> followers for a common goal and empowering them for a variety of inputs as part of a team |
| | Reconciling | <u>Enabling</u> the community to cope with conflict, tension and differences through meaning-making and managing |
| <i>Competencies outside</i> (Prophet) | Communicative | <u>Speaking</u> out publicly on behalf of the religious community and leading followers to do the same in their sphere of influence |
| | Innovative | <u>Leading</u> followers in innovative ways to engage in the social needs of the public and liberating people from oppressive social and political conditions |
| | Entrepreneurial | <u>Developing</u> a new sense of community that is both religiously and socially based by making place for a variety of spiritual experiences |
| <i>Competency that focuses on the earth</i> (Steward) | Ecological | <u>Sustaining</u> and nurturing the earth and her resources through mobilizing the faith community to participate in earth keeping |

As an organizing principle for developing a competency framework, I took the three meta-categories from Jack Barentsen (2016:272) and translated them to competencies. In other words we find:

- *core competencies* that qualify us as theological leaders,
- competencies that focus on *relationships within* the faith community,
- competencies that focus on *relationships with those outside* the faith community,
- and, a competency that focuses on *the environment*.

Under each of these headings I discuss three competencies and you will see each of these competencies are shaped by some kind of activity, something we do and perform. One could even say different roles that we play in the drama of faith and life (one of my favourite metaphors).

7. Describing the competency framework

In what follows I will give a short description of each of the four meta-categories: core competencies, competencies that focus on the relationships within the community, competencies that focus on relationships with those outside the community and a competency that focuses on the environment. Under each one of the four meta-categories I will then discuss the different competencies.

7.1 Core competencies

The core competencies of theological leadership relate to tasks that guarantee the core of this form of leadership and consequently concentrate on the religious and theological identity of the community. The result is that identity leadership plays a major role here and the following competencies can be distinguished.

7.1.1 Symbolic competency

The first competency relates to the minister, priest, pastor or mystic as representing and mediating the Sacred to the followers. As symbolic leader, presider or liturgist he/she strives to draw the community together in celebrating the community's culture through Word and sacrament. In this regard theological leadership participates in shaping the symbols and culture of their communities. Cormode (2006) points to the fact that culture shapes our expectations and perceptions and that theological leaders are required to do the interpretation

of new events and situations in such a way as to conform to the existing cultural repertoire. They do not only interact with these cultural symbols, but are also actively shaping these particular symbols, practices, beliefs and history of the local faith community. The shape and nature of these symbols, whether in the form of clothing, liturgical spaces, architecture, rituals and music, will, by their very nature, differ from community to community, meaning that a good understanding and delicate approach to it is important.

7.1.2 Spiritual competency

Closely related to symbolic competency is spiritual competency where the focus is on living an authentic and transparent spiritual life. In the words of the Belhar Confession, a life of unity, reconciliation and justice. The theological leadership embodies the community's identity and empower and inspire followers to live a similar life. As spiritual guide and role model the leader acts as a spiritual director in an attempt to deepen the follower's relationship with the divine but also to learn and grow in his/her own personal spirituality. Normally the person seeking spiritual direction shares his or her own stories of divine encounters while the theologian-director listens and asks questions in order to assist the follower in her/his process of spiritual growth and reflection (Dutton 2010).

7.1.3 Hermeneutical competency

The third core competency is the hermeneutical competency where the leader as theologian, interpreter, preacher and teacher interpret the Scriptures and tradition, not only to understand them in their original contexts but also to engage the followers in experiencing its relevance in daily life. Without a tradition, theological identity doesn't have any roots. In this regard leaders are in the words of Osmer (2008) interpretive guides where the guide takes people into new territory and help them to interpret this territory. The theological leadership is in other words according to Barentsen (2016:268) trying "to guide people in interpreting situations or life events in religious terms to appropriate a sense of divine involvement or closeness in the situation". The leader reframes certain events and situations so that they make sense within new contexts.

7.2 Competencies that focus within the religious community

Where the core competencies were concerned with the identity of theological leadership, the focus now shifts towards competencies related to the maintenance, preservation and promotion of the faith community.

7.2.1 Pastoral competency

One of the most distinctive tasks of theological leadership is the pastorate, the shepherd who cares for his/her flock. Through personal visits, the pastor looks after the members and is personally involved in their lives. Here is also little talk of hierarchy and one finds care in the form of walking along members in their quest for their own spiritual journey in which spiritual experience and meaning are central. There is also a democratization of care in which believers also care for one another, the so-called priesthood of all believers (Barentsen 2017:71).

7.2.2 Visionary competency

The challenges that postcoloniality poses to theological leadership call for leaders who can embrace the necessary changes, develop a vision and face the new era. When it comes to the prospering and growth of faith communities, research has shown that the ability of a community to set a clear vision, goals and directions is of great importance. It revolves around leading the community through mobilizing followers for a common goal and empowering them for a variety of inputs as part of a team. The danger to many faith communities (I suppose also in the Netherlands) is to spend all their time and energy on survival and maintenance, so much so that a vision for the needs of the world is lost. A strong commitment to the vision by the leadership through clear goals and directions also leads to greater commitment on the part of the members (Press & Powell 2012:36).

7.2.3 Reconciling competency

Crisis and conflict always form part of a community's existence and specifically so in our racially divided post apartheid society. With greater diversity in terms of different spiritualities, crisis recognition and intervention are an important competence for theological leaders. The faith experiences and interests of groups of believers in the faith community can easily grow apart. Learning to negotiate with the various interest groups is therefore a crucial leadership task. And then "crucial" in the sense of being related to the "cross" because the ministry of reconciliation and peace-keeping is entrusted to all believers but in particular to the leadership. Conflict management and linking subgroups are at the heart of this kind of leadership. With growing ethnic diversity there is also a growing need for cross-cultural competency that refers to the skills, knowledge and motivation that empower individuals to adjust effectively in cross-cultural surroundings (Barentsen 2017:72).

7.3 Competencies that focus on those outside the religious community

We have seen that a religious community is grounded in its theological identity (core competencies) and is complemented by the care and maintenance of that community (competencies within the community). However, faith communities are embedded in specific societies that influence and define them. The third group of competencies is therefore directed at the public dimension of society.

7.3.1 Communicative competency

Public communication can take on different forms, including traditional activities such as preaching, evangelism, the diaconate and the unmasking of social injustice. Leadership speaks out publicly on behalf of the religious community and lead followers to act in the same way in their sphere of influence. In this way, the pastor becomes a public theologian who represents the faith community in civic settings (Vanhoozer & Strachan 2015). In each of these settings, the message of faith is communicated in a specific way, whether to move others towards faith, for the purpose of caregiving or as advocating for the oppressed.

In the meantime, many forms of communication have been digitalized with the result that the leader is expected to have knowledge of social media and of religious communication via the internet and even through his/her own web page. An apologetic approach is an important part of this form of communication to help the many outsiders understand the Christian faith better. The task of public proclamation has thus changed from traditional faith language to articulating of the Christian faith for a diverse audience (Barentsen 2017:73).

7.3.2 Innovative competency

Research shows that leadership that is not open to innovation and the willingness to try new things stagnate very quickly. It can easily happen that the leadership can get out of touch with people beyond their own borders or with a new generation of believers. Openness to change and a spirit of innovation are very much needed and many leaders are experimenting with new approaches in terms of worship styles, different forms of groupwork, and missional activities. An interesting development in the innovation of faith communities is the emergence of new forms of churches alongside more conventional forms. In the literature we find terms such as “fresh expressions, mission-shaped church, emerging church and missional church” which appear as alternative communities of worship in the form of cell churches,

cafe churches, church plants, network-focused churches and seeker churches (Press & Powell 2012:44).

7.3.3 Entrepreneurial competency

Closely related to the innovative competency is the entrepreneurial competency, where leaders often feel that the traditional tasks of liturgy, proclamation and pastoral care do not necessarily lead to the revitalization of faith communities. In religious discourses, entrepreneurial leadership is often associated with missional leadership in the form of contributions to social justice and the civic community rather than just the building up of the faith community (Van Gelder 2009). This move represents a paradigm change that calls for new forms of leadership that are still undefined. The e-church in South Africa can be used as an example, both in terms of the nature of the faith community and the form of leadership involved here (Nell 2016:1).

7.4 A competency that focuses on planet earth

Planet earth is our mother and we don't treat her well. If one reads the United Nations report on climate change that appeared last month, one realizes in what deep trouble we are concerning the care for mother earth. In fact, I was even wondering whether we shouldn't put this competency right at the top, because if our planet is exhausted, all the other competencies won't be in need anymore.

7.4.1 Ecological competency

Coming from a country where we experienced the biggest drought in human history, where we were in the Western Cape only days away from what they called "day zero", where all our taps would have run dry, we suddenly became aware of the impact of global warming. During the past month I regularly listened to commentary on the United Nations Global Climate Report that was published on the 28th of March this year with the title "Climate and Land".⁵ It is very clear from this report that we are in serious trouble and the United Nation calls for urgent action on climate change. According to them every week brings a new example of climate related devastation, like we saw two weeks ago in the East of China. I

⁵ Climate Change and Land: An IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystem. <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl-report-download-page/> Visited 12 August 2019.

think it is important for theological leadership to develop some competency in how to address the challenge through the different modes of communication.

8. Conclusion

You might have seen in the table, the words priest, prophet, king and steward, related to the four meta-categories of competencies. I did it on purpose because I believe that behind or underneath all of these competencies one can find a deep theological sub-structure going back to the offices of priest, prophet, king and steward. These offices were also ascribed to the ministry of Jesus, *inter alia* by Calvin.

Leadership in Christian faith communities is therefore inherently a spiritual matter and so we should not take lightly the power we have to influence others' behaviour and actions. Therefore, I like the idea of a spirituality of leadership by which I mean that leaders must be open to guidance of the Holy Spirit, where the Spirit shapes and transforms us into the image of Christ.

We can thus summarize the four sets of competencies in the following way:

- The core competencies relate to a form of priestly listening grounded in a *spirituality of presence*: attending to others in their particularity within the presence of God.
- The internal competencies relate to a form of transforming leadership, grounded in a *spirituality of servant leadership*: taking risks on behalf of the community to help it better embody its mission as a sign and witness of God's self-giving love.
- The external competencies relate to a form of prophetic discernment, grounded in a *spirituality of discernment*: helping others hear God's Word in the particular circumstances of their lives and world.
- The ecological competency relates to a form of wise judgment grounded in a *spirituality of sagely wisdom*: guiding others in how to do earthkeeping.

But before you tell me it is impossible to have all these competencies, it is super-human and not realistic, I must admit, I think it is indeed impossible for one person to master all these competencies at once. Therefore we find comfort when we turn to Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:17-25 where he writes about the foolishness of the cross. Following Paul's style of leadership, we are all "Christ fools" and leadership only becomes possible through the foolishness of the cross.

I want to conclude with some final remarks concerning theological leadership seen from this point of view. First, foolish leadership interrupts ‘the principalities and the powers.’ Second, such leadership creates a liminal space where the Spirit might move, we are not the centre of attention. Third, such leadership makes new perceptions possible and helps to discern the presence of God’s kingdom. Finally, such leadership does not take itself too seriously, because it completely depends on the gift and power of the Spirit.

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