

## A Godly Servant Leader for All Seasons

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In the course of my almost 8 decades and 7 careers, I have met a lot of interesting people, but there are only a few who stand out as exceptional, and my good friend Paul Wong is certainly one of them. It has been my privilege to partner with Paul on a number of significant projects that have brought a sense of meaningful purpose into hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of lives of those who were destined to give leadership in their organizations.

Although we came from two very different and distinct disciplines, public history and positive psychology, we shared a longing for good leadership and well-honed views on the qualities that good leaders should possess. It was a marriage of the lessons from history and the operation of contemporary organizations with the promotion of personal and organizational meaningful purposes in the workplace.

Our connection began through the confluence of Paul seeking God's direction for combining his professional work as a psychology professor and his spiritual calling as a pastor into a meaningful Christian ministry, and my desire to make practical the mission of Trinity Western University (TWU) "to develop godly Christian leaders: positive, goal-oriented university graduates with thoroughly Christian minds; growing disciples of Jesus Christ who glorify God through fulfilling the Great Commission, serving God and people in the various marketplaces of life." The catalyst for this union came from outside of both of our spheres of influence. In the early 1990s, there was a movement by some of the larger universities to relegate members of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada that did not offer approved graduate programs into a third and insignificant category of membership. I, along with other TWU administrators, were determined to ensure that this did not happen to our university. We needed graduate studies right away and counselling psychology seemed to be our best and fastest track. Thanks to the hard work of our newly appointed Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Ken Davis, a proposal was quickly developed, with the support of the chairman of the Counselling Psychology Department at UBC, that met the approval of the Ministry of Advanced Education for implementation in September 1993. To launch this new program, we needed a prestigious scholarly director. and I believed that Paul was by far our leading candidate.

Thus, it was that TWU hired Paul to develop the first and still the only Canadian Christian university-based graduate program in counselling psychology. Unfortunately, I had little to offer Paul beyond moral support in launching the program. Because of expanding undergraduate enrollment, we could only give him one room and two adjoining offices in the oldest building on campus. There were virtually no library resources for the program, so Paul donated his extensive collection of reprinted scholarly articles and testing instruments. There were only a few partially qualified faculty in counselling psychology on campus, so Paul gave up his earned sabbatical at Trent University to get the program started. He immediately brought in faculty from UBC to fill out the roster and others to act as external examiners for the student's theses. This gave us credibility as a program and later led to our CACREP accreditation. For the next 8 years under Paul's direction and electrifying passion, the program flourished as the flagship graduate program at the university. He brought professional credibility and, along with the indispensable Lilian, developed a community of learning that was rooted in their caring for students as individuals and unending hospitality. The Wong's Christmas and graduation house

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parties were something not to be missed. At every academic retreat, Paul was sure to introduce some light-hearted fun. I think my favorite was when he brought inflatable sumo wrestling suits and I watched him take on the much larger students. Paul built a close-knit community spirit while all the while maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence that enabled the grads to successfully transition into meaningful careers as competent counsellors. From today's vantage point, it all worked out, but there should be no illusions that it was an easy ride.

Graduate studies were not understood or supported by many on campus, and Paul and I spent many hours running interference for the program to flourish. My job was to remove the hindrances in the university's systems to Paul's productivity so that his creative potential could be unleashed. This brought me into a new appreciation for his qualities of courageous and tenacious Christian leadership that Paul brought to the university and a mutual desire to promote and demonstrate the model of biblically-based servant leadership as an antidote to top down dictatorial leadership.

Scholarly collaboration with a trusted colleague can be one of the most rewarding academic endeavours. Over the years, we have sought to improve the quality of leadership through infusing research-based servant leadership into organizations. Our first paper on the Conceptual Framework of Servant Leadership has received more than 500 citations, and our second paper, in which we developed a tool for measuring servant leadership, has been used as the basis for research in more than 300 masters and doctoral level theses. In fact, it is the most widely used instrument for measuring servant leadership in the world. It has been used by major corporations like Weyerhaeuser and Synovus, and countless non-profit organizations including hospitals, schools, universities, and churches. Over and over again, it has been shown that servant leadership is the model that provides the most meaningful employee engagement. It is why 5 of the top 10 companies in Fortune Magazine's Best Companies to Work for in America are servant-led. It is why servant-led companies consistently outperform all other Fortune 500 companies with the highest employee engagement indexes. Leadership is always born out of a dissatisfaction with the status quo and that is why it has been my great privilege to partner with Paul in devoting our energies to making the world a better place to live in through good leadership development.

Much of what I have accomplished in leadership development and giving more than 3,000 presentations on the subject in addition to my teaching and publishing thereon is directly connected to Paul. He provided the statistical methodology and validation which I could not do. I made his essays on "What Makes a Great Worker," and "What Makes a Great Leader" positive psychology compulsory reading for all of my leadership students at TWU and Columbia Bible College. His emphasis on finding meaning in the workplace and life in general has been a consistent theme in my publications and presentations. It was through his encouragement that I delivered the paper at his first International Conference on Personal Meaning on "Finding Meaning Through Servant Leadership" that demonstrated how Tom Terez's 22 keys to meaningful work could best be promoted through organizations dedicated to servant leadership. Then, we teamed up to bring a leading trainer from the Synovus Leadership Institute as a practical example to the second conference. Synovus Financial Corporation had been named by Fortune Magazine as "The Best Company to Work for in America" and we wanted to demonstrate their success based on how they married meaningful work with servant leadership. For both Paul and myself, leadership theory and practice had to go hand in hand.

Against all odds, Paul's leadership has always inspired and sometimes held me accountable to being a better Christian servant leader. Let me illustrate this by measuring Paul's

own leadership. Two of the leading researchers on leadership, Jack Zenger and Joe Folkman, have assessed more than a million leaders from which they have concluded that there are 6 key leadership levers. Let's look at these levers through Paul's leadership for life.

1. Relationships are developed with the consideration of others—Paul purposefully invested in the development of caring relationships with students and professional colleagues.
2. Inspiration means engaging and motivating others to perform to their highest potential—Paul never ceased to encourage students to be their very best and never give up.
3. Innovation supports and encourages the need to change and improve—Paul was never without ideas on how one could make something better through their personal contributions.
4. Strategic Vision creates and connects others to a clear, forward-thinking vision—Paul had a vision for what a Christian Counselling Psychology Program and International Conference on Personal Meaning could do that drew others into their accomplishment.
5. Acumen is being on the cutting edge of professional practices and learning—Paul has demonstrated this through his many publications and papers.
6. Execution employs all necessary resources to deliver extraordinary results—Paul gave of himself tirelessly to invest in others and their success, often at great expense to himself. He was always networking in order to harness the expertise of others to advance the cause and his many successes were his reward.

Zenger and Folkman say that a leader who demonstrate just three of these levers rank in the 90th percentile of all extraordinary leaders—what then would they say of a leader who has demonstrated all of them?

Thank you, Paul, for your years of dedicated service to making the world a more meaningful and better place for us all, for which I, as your esteemed colleague and friend, am a most grateful recipient.