

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR GLOBAL MISSIONS

**CULTIVATING EFFECTIVE LEADERS FOR
CHANGING GLOBAL MISSION FIELDS**



REV. DR. TANIKA SHEPPARD

JULY 21-23, 2025

REV. DR. TANIKKA SHEPPARD

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ICEBREAKER: WHAT'S HAPPENING?

In your group take a moment to observe the image and discuss what you think is happening. Then write a short description or explanation on your index card.

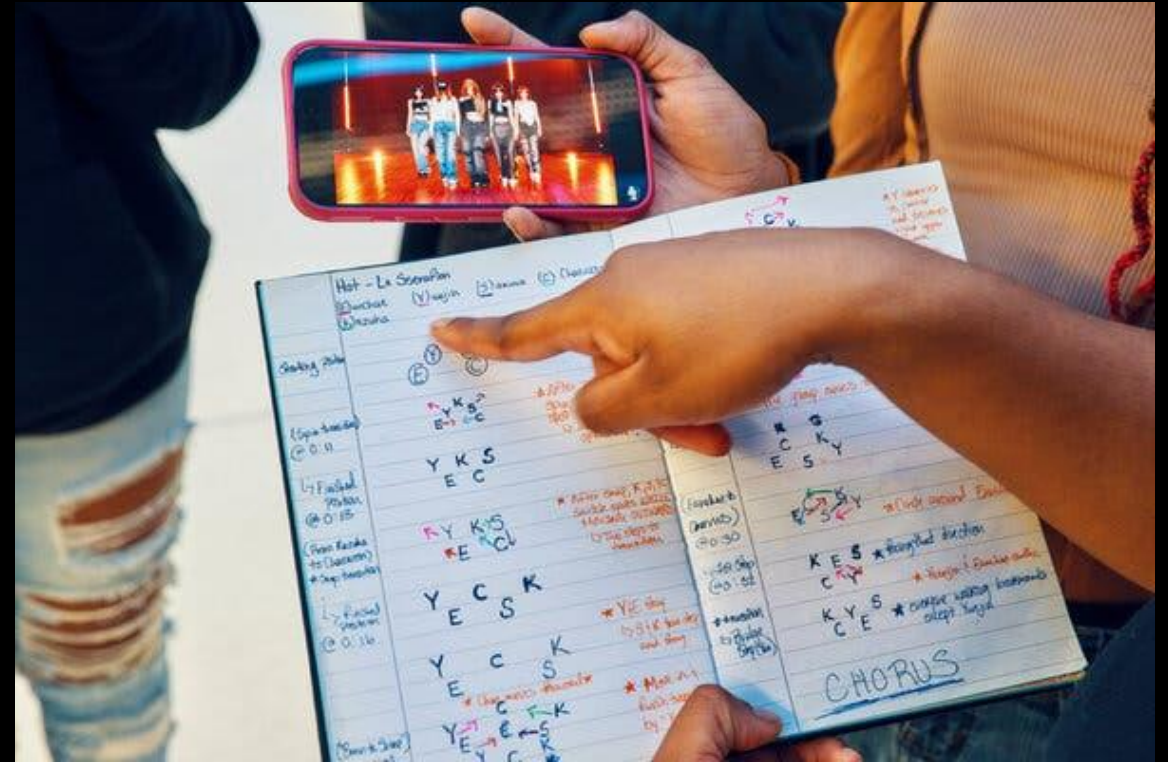




A Bai fisherman pulled two cormorants away from a fish during a festival in Yunnan Province, China. The birds are domesticated for fishing.

Photo by Sheng Li, Reuters, via The Learning Network, The New York Times, May 2025





The lower level of Moynihan Hall, in Penn Station, doubles as a rehearsal space for a variety of dance groups, including K-pop, salsa and Brazilian Zouk. The girls are members of the K-pop dance group ETRNL.

Photo by Mohamed Sadek for The New York Times, via The Learning Network, May 2025

UNDERSTANDING YOUR LENS

The unique way you interpret and engage the world.

It is shaped by your:

- Cultural/familial background
- Theological convictions
- Historical context
- Social realities
- Life experiences
- Political views
- Media, etc.

It has limitations!



THE TRI-FOLD LENS

FOR LEADING EFFECTIVE GLOBAL MISSIONS

3-DAY JOURNEY

LIBERATION



LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

Aligning ourselves with God's will for justice, where all people are set free and empowered to live fully in the freedom Christ has given. (Galatians 5:1 and Matthew 25:31-46)

LEADERSHIP



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Forming leaders who are spiritually grounded, culturally aware, and prophetically engaged.

MISSIONS



CONTEMPORARY MISSIOLOGIES

Reimagining missions as collaborative, contextual, and justice-oriented.



ISAIAH 61:1-4

NRS
V

1. The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
2. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,
3. and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.
4. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities

LUKE 4:14-21

14. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.
15. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.
16. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,
17. and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:
18. “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoner and recovery of sight for the blind to set the oppressed free,
19. to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”
20. Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.
21. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”



2-MINUTE DRILL

What are modern forms of oppression that people need to be liberated from today?

What systems, situations, or mindsets hinder human flourishing and resist God's justice?

In what ways are people still in bondage today: spiritually, socially, politically, economically, etc.?



CONTRASTING THEOLOGIES: BARRIERS TO LIBERATION

Some of the traditional theological perspectives have historically stood in tension, or even direct opposition, to liberation theologies, particularly as they relate to justice, freedom, and the lived experience of the oppressed or marginalized people.



Divine Sanction for the Status Quo



Fragmented Gospel: Privatized
and Individualized Soteriology



Spiritualized Materialism:
Prosperity Gospel



Colonial and Missionary
Supremacy Theology



Dualistic or Escapist Theology



Patriarchy: Male Exclusivity and
Exultation





LIBERATION THEOLOGIES



What are
liberation
theologies?

If theology is “the systematic study of the existence and nature of the divine and its relationship to and influence upon other beings”, it could be inferred that liberation theologies are the studies and uses of religious beliefs, articles of faith, and the Divine’s activities to establish a basis for human equality and justice.



LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

GUIDING PREMISE:

There is an anthropological problem that should be addressed, at least in part, through theological means.

They Are Not Static:

Liberation theologies are NOT sets of static beliefs and academic pursuits to be studied and memorized...



They Are Active:

Liberation theologies are living and active demonstrations for justice and righteousness that question, cry out, unite, indict, induce, voice, create, demand, teach, preach, reimagine, reform, and redefine...



They Pursue Equity

Liberation theologies are founded upon the principle of equity because all humans are created in the *Imago Dei* (Image of God)...



TYPES of LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

United States-Based Liberation Theologies

1. American Indian
2. Asian American Theology
3. Asian American Feminist Theology
4. Black Liberation Theology
5. Feminist Liberation Theology
6. Hispanic/Latino(a) Theology
7. Latina Theology / Mujerista Theology
8. LGBTQIA+ Liberation Theologies
9. Native Feminist Theology
10. Womanist Theology

Global Liberation Theologies

11. Latin American Liberation Theology
12. African Liberation Theologies
13. Asian Liberation Theologies.
14. Minjung Theology (South Korea)
15. Dalit Theology (India)
16. Palestinian Liberation Theology
17. Middle Eastern Postcolonial Theologies
18. Indigenous Liberation Theologies
19. Eco-Liberation Theologies
20. Disability Liberation Theology
21. Postcolonial Theologies

P's OF LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

POWER - The ability to act, influence, or effect change; includes legal capacity, spiritual authority, and social agency

POSSESSION

The condition of having access to and rightful stewardship over resources, identity, land, knowledge, etc.

PRIVILEGE

A right, benefit, or immunity enjoyed by a specific person or group beyond what is available to most...

PARTICIPATION

The act of actively taking part in communal life, justice movements, worship, and decision-making...

PRESENCE

The state of being intentionally engaged and situated in solidarity with others.

POLITICS

The strategies, structures, and actions involved in the pursuit and exercise of power...

PROPHETIC

(Dissent) The practice of living out one's theological convictions through public and courageous action...

PROGRESS

Tangible, measurable institutional or structural advancements toward justice and equity...

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LEADERSHIP



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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Liberationist
leaders have
a counter-
cultural
perspective.

Within the framework of liberation theology, leadership development is not simply about equipping individuals with skills to manage or direct. It is about forming leaders who are spiritually grounded, critically aware, and courageously committed to justice and liberation in every context they serve. We are not only devoted to the formation of leaders (discipleship), but even more so their freedom to choose *if and how* they will follow God.





Rooted in the
Struggle



Committed to
Praxis



Accountable to Community



Culturally and
contextually
aware



Guided by
hope and
vision

5 KEY TRAITS of LIBERATIONIST LEADERS



The intentional formation of individuals and communities who embody God's liberating love and justice. It nurtures leaders who are shaped by the experiences of the marginalized, committed to dismantling systems of oppression, and guided by theological reflection and prophetic action.

POWER - Liberationist leaders steward power not to dominate but to dismantle oppression and empower others.

P's IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

POSSESSION

Liberationist leadership affirms the right to reclaim what oppressive systems have denied.

PRIVILEGE

Liberationist leaders confront and convert privilege into shared power and advocacy.

PARTICIPATION

Liberationist leadership is collective, not "collecting" or hierarchical.

PRESENCE

Liberationist leaders practice incarnational leadership, showing up with, not just for, the people.

POLITICS

Liberationist leadership recognizes that all leadership is political and chooses to side with justice.

PROPHETIC

(Dissent) Liberationist leaders are willing to disrupt, challenge, and disobey unjust norms and systems to faithfully obey God's call.

PROGRESS

Liberationist leadership measures success not by status, numbers, or prestige, but by structural change and human flourishing.

LIBERATIONIST LEADERS & THE INJUSTICE SPECTRUM



How are YOU initiating systemic change and fighting for justice (against oppression)?



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MISSIONS



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Missio Dei: God's Mission and Purpose in the World

A 4-Part Framework by Wilbert R. Shenks

1. THE EMBODIMENT – Jesus Christ
2. THE POWER – The Holy Spirit
3. THE INSTRUMENT – Us (Followers of Christ – The Church)
4. THE CONTEXT – The Mission Field or Place of Service

POWER - Mission is not about holding power, but redistributing it, as well as resources.

P's IN CONTEMPORARY MISSIOLOGIES

POSSESSION

Mission should never be a means of taking, owning, exploiting, or hoarding.

PRIVILEGE

Mission requires unmasking and relinquishing privilege.

PARTICIPATION

Mission is shared life, and supportive, empowering work, not imposed vision.

PRESENCE

Authentic mission requires long-term, incarnational presence.

POLITICS

Mission is inherently political, and must take the side of the oppressed.

PROPHETIC

(Dissent) Mission challenges not only the world's empires, but also the church's complicity.

PROGRESS

Liberative mission measures success by healing, liberation, and restored dignity, not buildings, budgets, or numbers.

4 TYPES OF MISSION WORK



4 Expressions of Missional Outreaches, from Lott Carey (David E. Goatley)



COMPASSION

***Seek to provide
immediate and
basic necessities***


- Food
- Shelters
- Clothing
- Building/Home Improvement

EMPOWERMENT

***Help people
advance beyond
their state of need
so that they are
NOT dependent on
systems***

- Literacy
- Job Skills & Support
- Training Leaders
- Mentoring Students



- 
- Social Justice Initiatives
 - Immigration
 - Religious Freedom
 - Voter Registration & Education

ADVOCACY

***Seeks to address issues
within institutions,
industries, and political
systems***



EVANGELISM

***Offers ways to
share the Good
News and connect
people with God***

- Prisons/Detention Centers
 - Senior Homes
- Sharing Love of Christ
- Where people gather



THE “4” in Action



SCENARIO: We encounter a person that is experiencing homeless on the street.

COMPASSION – Food, clothing, shelter, a place to refresh

EMPOWERMENT – Training, job skills, education

ADVOCACY – Address policies and social systems

EVANGELISM – Shares the Good News – “You are important and loved.”

QUESTIONS?



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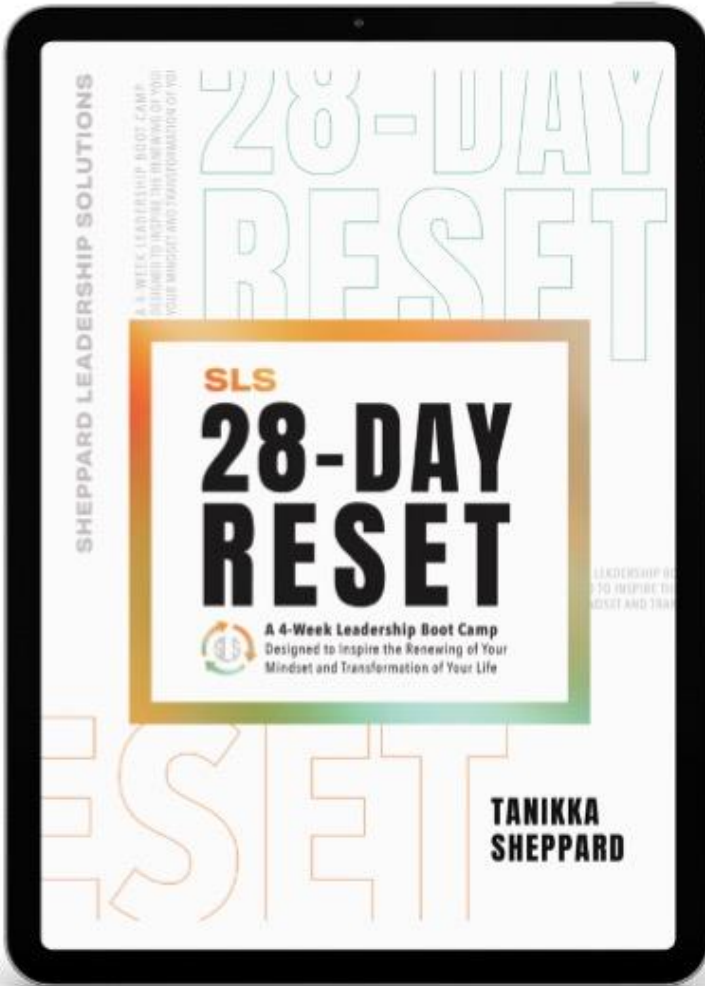
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