LEADING TRANSFORMATION #75:

MORAL VISION—UNDERSTANDING MORAL VISION

Moral Vision is an envisioning of the desired character and culture of a people. It is constituted by intentionally and carefully selected moral values. In very simple terms it is a vision of Who a people want to become; and the values they want to characterize their lives.

Moral Vision properly articulated and utilized in leadership and governance, provides a strong foundation for the development of societies. All other Strategic Pillars for development build on this foundation.

No society can develop if its citizens are living by conflicting values. Yet many societies focus primarily on the economic and technological aspects of development with very little attention if any to the moral dimension. This approach to development takes people to a destination only for them to discover that they themselves are absent.

Moral vision provides the compass for other decisions regarding leadership, governance and development. In a sense, moral vision is the north-star for development in any society. It provides the true and standard north against which other destinations can be clarified. Development is ultimately meant for the people; and not the people for development. If the goal of development is to make life meaningful, purposeful and fully satisfying, then clarity regarding the nature and quality of that life should be the heart and foundation for development plans. Clarity regarding the “ideal life” from a people’s perspective, facilitates decisions on how to utilize development to deliver that ideal.

It is entirely possible to pursue development of an institution or nation without factoring in the interests of the personnel or citizens. The result is most likely not going to enhance, empower and propel the people to higher levels of quality life and productivity. The interests of the people must be served by, rather than sacrificed for, development. In cases where a people are used for development that does not serve their interests, there are usually other beneficiaries. Such developments are not wholesome because they involve the exploiting of one set of people for the benefits and interests of others.

Development that has the right Moral Vision will take into consideration the interests of all parties and seek to approximate "win-win" arrangements as much as possible.

A moral vision is only as strong as the values that constitute it. Morality has to do with patterns of behavior. Moral Values have to do with highly rated or prioritized patterns of behavior. That is, patterns of behavior that are highly prioritized and desired for identity and performance.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is the Moral Vision for your institution? What are the constituting moral values?

2. If there is no articulated Moral Vision for your institution, what values would you recommend for inclusion? How would you go about helping create a Moral Vision for your institution?