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Passing the Baton of Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice

(Introduction – Volume 5, Issue 1)

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Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice (SLTP) is an open access, peer reviewed, Cabell's listed publication of the Turner College of Business at Columbus State University. We are published both online and in print bi-annually, and have been since our inaugural edition in August of 2014. Our mission has always been to advance servant leadership by publishing quality empirical and theoretical work in the field, as well as practitioner-centered work concerning the practical application of servant leadership principles.

It's therefore been no surprise that we've had the honor of publishing quality articles from theorists, empiricists and practitioners alike. What has been a pleasant surprise, though, is the breadth of fields represented by our authors. We've enjoyed publishing articles written by teachers, coaches, researchers, corporate officers, Army officers, and students, representing fields as broad as leadership, academics, sports, public administration, veterans affairs, human resource management, U.S. history, religion, and military history. It's been a pleasure and an honor working with each of our authors and reviewers and interacting with stakeholders both in person and over social media.

If you are holding a hard copy of *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice (SLTP)*, Volume 5, Issue 1, you are one of the 250 valued colleagues we know have such an interest in our work that you will enjoy receiving your copy of *SLTP* in the mail. Thank you for your loyal and continued support. Though you are a valued group of colleagues, our hard copy readers are not an exclusive group. We hope that you will encourage your colleagues in the field of ethical and servant leadership to hit us up for their own free copies. We are happy to share.

If you have downloaded us electronically, thank you! Your download is one of more than 6,464 downloads of *SLTP* since our inaugural issue four years ago. As you can deduct, we are averaging over 1,600 downloads per year thanks to readers such as yourself! Each download represents a reader from one of at least 728 unique institutions helping us accomplish our mission (to advance servant leadership, both as a field of academic study and as a management practice) and reach our vision (to become the first choice journal for authors and researchers of servant leadership and related fields).

Thanks to internet analytic tools, we can note that we've caught the attention of institutions such as USA Today, the U.S. House of Representatives, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the Department of Agriculture and Food, and even Facebook, Inc. And, while we know that our readership spans 122 countries, we can also tell you that the vast majority of our readers reside in the United States, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Canada, and Germany. I remain convinced that servant leadership truly is of universal relevance!

The present issue represents the latest 4 of our total 32 peer reviewed articles. The current lineup includes Christy Tabor's, *A Voice for the Least of These*; Pfrombeck and Verdorfer's empirical study of servant leadership and leader stress; Russell, Russell and Broomé's survey of servant leadership in the fire and emergency services; and Harber and McMaster's take on adapting servant leadership to follower maturity.

Tabor's, *A Voice for the Least of These* offers an enjoyable biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. Tabor walks us through the highlights of Roosevelt's life from the lens of servant leadership. Tabor concludes that Eleanor Roosevelt gracefully exemplified servant leadership and graciously revolutionized the role of the American First Lady.

Pfrombeck and Verdorfer offer an empirical study of the roles of psychological capital (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007) and sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987) as stress buffers for the servant leader. They found that psychological capital is positively related to servant leadership. They also found that sense of coherence moderates and buffers the relationship between servant leadership and leader stress. They conclude that, "these empirical findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological processes that precede servant leadership behavior and result from it."

Eric Russell and his colleagues provide us with our next reading. They utilized Dennis and Bocarnea's (2007) Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) and surveyed 130 professional uniformed and sworn fire and emergency services personnel. Their study concluded that this population does seem to experience at least 6 of the 7 virtuous constructs of servant leadership as described by Patterson (2003).

Finally, greatly influenced by their colleague, Benjamin Staats' Adaptable Emphasis Leadership Model (2015), Gary Harber and Christopher McMaster offer their own

theoretical approach toward dynamic leadership in a diverse environment. Rather than Staats' (2015) dimensions of management-leadership and objectives-people, Harber and McMaster offer follower maturity as the informative dimension as the servant leader slides between transactional and transformational leadership. The elegant similarity between the two approaches (Staats' and Harber and McMaster's) is the understanding that both transactional and transformational leadership are legitimate choices of even the most authentic of servant leaders.

I hope you enjoy all of our offerings in this edition of SLTP.

And now I must address the reason for the title choice of this little essay. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve the field of servant leadership as the co-founder and executive editor of SLTP since 2014. As my strengths lie in creating vision and building infrastructure, I now step aside and pass the baton to one who is a much better manager than I. I know that my colleague, Kevin Hurt, will provide great leadership and management for our journal as we continue toward our vision of becoming the first choice journal for authors and researchers of servant leadership and related fields.

As always, we appreciate your readership, authorship, and reviewership. I personally appreciate the support of all of our stakeholders. Keep serving in your field of study and practice.

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