

Leadership Approaches That Sustain PCI

How do certain approaches to organizational leadership and policy decision-making contribute to or create systemic injustice?

First, a common set of factors hinder Navigators, including leaders, from responding to poverty, corruption and injustice (PCI) by disciplining for blessing, righteousness and justice. These factors include: *dualism, pietism, fear, individualism and a niche focus*. Those five hindrances are more fully explained in our [hindrances document](#).

This document will focus on **how those hindrances can shape our leadership approaches**. Answers to the following six questions point to leadership approaches that sustain PCI efforts:

1. What is included in our Navigator Calling, Values and Vision? The dignity and value of every person is one of our core values. In fact, our [Signs of Righteous, Justice and Blessing](#) document shows how each of our Core Values leads us to address PCI. Our Vision speaks of a heart for the whole person, compassion for the vulnerable and broken, and transformed communities that bring joy and hope to their surrounding environments. Yet some Navigators view responding to poverty, corruption and injustice as an add-on to true Navigator ministry. The [hindrances document](#) shows that we need to shift our paradigm, to collectively take responsibility for those hindrances. *Otherwise, those doing PCI ministry are marginalized and devalued.*
2. Who decides? Decision-making authority is often centralized in a relatively small, exclusive and risk-averse group. That can result in desirable efficiencies, but the decisions can seem like impositions to those being led. The selection processes of those in authority can overly reflect a dominant, majority culture. Moreover, decisions are often made by people who are far from the most vulnerable people. The voices of those who endure injustices can be marginalized and unheard. Sometimes centralized decisions fail to empower those closer to the problems, often hindering them from taking personal and collective responsibility. *All that creates blind spots regarding poverty, corruption and injustice, and the minority voices that we all need are marginalized and stifled.*
3. Who influences? Leaders selected to make decisions are often too heavily influenced by majority culture voices and those who fund the work. Ministry leaders are often selected based on ministry success as defined by the majority culture (i.e. majority ethnic, socioeconomic, ministry philosophy, etc.). Such leaders can become paternalistic or fail to speak up publicly on behalf of the marginalized. Fear of losing financial donors can lead leaders to avoid serving marginalized people in their decisions. Those who are vocal about systemic structural injustices are often silenced or ostracized. That quickly erodes the trust of those who share the same concerns but do not speak up. *As a result of all this, the lack of trust and support contributes to minority-culture leaders and disciplinarians to disengaging from majority-culture leaders.*
4. How do resources flow? Deputation fund-raising models tend to favor those who come from resource-rich backgrounds, and limit opportunities for others. Project funding and personal funding tend to flow to those who have access to and favor with dominant stakeholder cultures. Those (usually the minority) who cannot raise funds, even when they are effective in ministry,

are eventually disqualified. Ministry tools, financial systems, retirement and benefit programs often flow to those who might need them least. All of this can contribute to long-term systemic poverty, corruption and injustice. *As a result, majority-culture and upper-class voices create Navigator ministry cultures that are unfriendly to minority and PCI ministries.*

5. What actually changes? There is a tendency to acknowledge problems and even articulate what needs to change followed by a failure to implement those changes in a timely way. Listening, or verbalizing regret is not enough if there is no change demonstrating true repentance. Action timelines often lack accountability. *Consequently, when those who experience injustice don't see change, they are discounted and devalued. They often lose hope and quietly leave.*
6. What is celebrated? Leaders and systems often celebrate spiritual conversions, private spiritual disciplines, high visibility events and individual performance more than long-term change that is difficult to measure. The holistic, transformational power of discipling for blessing, righteousness and justice—factors that flow from God's kingdom—can be more difficult to measure or discuss. Subtle yet pervasive messaging about success measures can hinder the less measurable and costly initiatives needed to address poverty, corruption and injustice. *Under those circumstances, PCI ministry does not flourish.*

To overcome poverty, corruption and injustice will take more than good leadership skills. It will take more than responding to the six questions above. Our efforts must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. There is no rule book for leading an effective, sustained effort. And the Holy Spirit cares about the needs of the poor and oppressed more than we do.

"The learning style of Americans is often very different from the style of many Native Americans.

Often Western religion is expressed in *beliefs*.

To Native Americans, *practices* are beliefs.

In other words, one comes to believe something because one does it."

(Randy Woodley, Shalom and the Community of Creation, page 96)

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

(John 13:17)