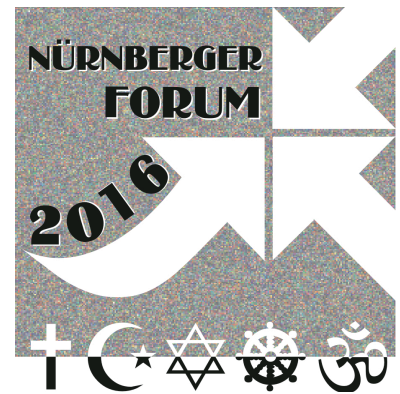


Willem Fourie

Leadership development in a professional context – a field for public theology?



ABSTRACT

Can leaders be developed? And can theology contribute to the development of leaders, particularly in Africa? In this paper I argue that is indeed possible to develop leaders, and that theology has a role to play in this regard. Starting with an overview of the pervasiveness, controversy and ambiguity of the concept 'leadership', I formulate a descriptive working definition of the concept 'leader'. I draw on leadership theory operationalised for non-Western contexts to formulate this definition, according to which leadership could be defined in terms of legitimate influence. Based on this definition I argue that leadership development is not a mere technical process in which knowledge and skills are transferred. The development of leaders requires the creation and strengthening of sources of legitimate influence, including institutional, organisational, religious, cultural, technical and moral dimensions of legitimacy. The creation of these sources of influence lies beyond the scope of one societal actor, and certainly beyond the exclusive control of political institutions. Theology – as reflection, lived practices and in its institutional incarnations – has the potential to contribute to leadership development initiatives by creating and strengthening sources of legitimate influence.

Dr Willem Fourie
Programme for Leadership and Development in Africa
Albert Luthuli Centre for Responsible Leadership
University of Pretoria