

## **James Roberts and Lawrence Chonko**

*Servant Leadership: The Impossible Dream or Leadership Paradigm of the Ages*  
(Marketing / Business)

Christ left a legacy of servant leadership when he said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." (Matthew 20:28). At Baylor, community service is important to the university and to the kinds of students that attend the university. Baylor University facilitates meaningful service activities in an effort to promote and create leadership skills in students. Baylor is blessed with countless students who have a passion for volunteering and serving. Think of the impact on people, the community, and the university if the concept of servant leadership can be better understood as it is practiced in the myriad of wonderful programs already in existence at Baylor. Think of the programs that could be created and the impact that could be realized both with Baylor students and the Baylor community as well as on a national and global scale.

Christ's mission was to teach, lead and train and He did so without pursuit of the high rise corner office with the view of the lake. He surrounded Himself with disciples and poured Himself into them, investing in them and the crowds that followed. Servant leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant leadership promotes the valuing of development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the organization, and those served by the organization.

We can go back to the first chapters of the Bible to learn about servant leadership. Adam in Genesis 1 and 2 was instructed to "dress and keep" the physical creation God had wrought. Adam was not instructed to be passive. Indeed, he was charged with applying God's laws to the world. He was expected to do something and make changes in accordance with higher laws and thought patterns than his own. Servant leaders are charged with maintaining sets of standards that are in line with higher laws. Thus servant leaders cannot prosper by the simple application of their own standards. They must apply standards that are best for the employee team and the small business.

This proposal addresses two broad research questions. First, what are the characteristics that are common to those who practice servant leadership? Second, what are the behaviors exhibited by servant leaders in the workplace? It concludes with a clear outline for research involving servant leadership. To begin the quest for an improved understanding of servant leadership, the outputs of this proposed research include the following: 1) the creation of a servant leadership scale that can be used to assess an individual's own propensity for servant leadership or an individual's perceptions of the servant leadership traits of others, 2) norms of servant leadership among the Baylor University student population, and 3) the foundation for a larger proposal (targeted to the Kauffman Foundation), the intent of which is to secure funding for research on servant leadership in entrepreneurial and small business settings.

Servant leadership has been practiced in some of America's best firms. These "best" companies are characterized by the following: 1) openness and fairness, 2) camaraderie/friendliness, 3) opportunities, 4) pride in work and company, 5) pay/benefits, and 6) security, their list of companies including TDIndustries, Southwest Airlines, The ServiceMaster, and Synovus Financial. There is strength in the movement toward servant leadership and the ideas of follower learning, growth and empowerment suggest that servant leadership has basis in tested and untested theory. In general, small business entrepreneurs must be leaders. Great leaders know how to take small ideas and grow them. They can lead their people into tough situations and make them feel comfortable to be there. They know that employees will excel if accomplishments are shared and celebrated. They are willing to give employees power to get things done- they do not hoard power. They listen and hear. They do not take themselves too seriously. And, there are millions of small businesses in the U.S. Think of the potential impact on people and business performance resulting from the infusion of servant leadership into business models. Good business is about good ethics and concern for employee and customer welfare.

**Philippians 2:3**-Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.