LEADING TRANSFORMATION #14:
MOTIVATIONS FOR CHARACTER CHOICES

Character is the result of our consistent choices in life. There are TWO MAJOR DIRECTIONS in life that provide the backdrop for our motivations. We are either directed toward LIFE-ENHANCEMENT characterized by integrity, justice and peace; or LIFE-NEGATION which results in corruption, injustice and conflict. The motivations behind our choices operate within the broader context of our overall and ultimate directions or orientations within particular moments in life.
What are the motivations that drive our human choices in life? We can look at this by reflecting on what I call the ABC of human motivation.

A-ACHIEVE
B-BELONG
C-CONTROL

People are driven to Achieve, Belong, or Control. Those driven to ACHIEVE are highly motivated to accomplish specific goals in life. This drive influences their choices in life. Then we have people who are more driven to BELONG. For this group of people, what is most important is to link their identity to a particular group or community. The third motivation is that of CONTROL. Those motivated by the desire to control seek the power to move things toward accomplishing their pre-determined desired ends. We are all driven by a mixture of these motivations, but the ones that are most pronounced define us.

God made humans in His image so that they are creative. Creativity works well when we seek to implement our ideas in order to accomplish audacious goals that promote the general wellbeing of people. When scientists are creatively exploring ways of understanding nature better in order to improve the quality of life of humans, they are pursuing God-likeness to a certain degree. Compliance with the status quo, passive and safe attitudes towards the challenges of the world are in a related sense ungodly tendencies. Challenging the status quo and fighting for freedom, and the means to improve the quality of the lives of others is part of the pursuit of godliness.

Humans are also social beings. Our lives are meaningful when lived within the context of community. We derive our identity from the communities we are closely part of. The lack of supportive community results in loneliness and sometimes meaninglessness. We are motivated to belong to communities where we can give and receive in the spirit of love. This is a deep seated human motivation that is directly linked to our very nature.

God gave humans dominion over the birds, fish, animals, plants, etc. He did not give any humans dominion over their fellow human beings. This is the reason why oppressive systems and dictatorships whether religious or political are essentially anti-God and inhuman.

When we are rightly motivated, we will seek to belong together; dream, design and accomplish great life-enhancing ideas; and control things for the benefit of humanity. We will love people and use things. When we are wrongly motivated we will dream, design and implement life-negating ideas; loving things, and using people.

REFLECTING on our direction in life, and our unique mix of motivations reveal something about our hearts as well as personalities. Are you oriented at this moment in your life toward life-enhancement or life-negation? Are you motivated more to achieve, belong or control? The right direction in life is to seek to enrich your own life and that of others. There is however no right or wrong mix of motivations when our overall orientation is life-enhancement; seeking to promote integrity, justice and peace.