

**Taking the Mantle**

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## Introduction

Through 1 Kings 18 we are introduced to the history of the nation of Israel and how the kingdoms are divided. The southern kingdom is reigned by good kings, but the northern kingdom is ruled by kings who were thought to be evil and reviled. As we come to 1 Kings 19, we are brought to the history of Elijah and his struggles with depression and an unflinching despair. Elijah is forced to recognize that the battle never ends. He must come to terms with his loss of his vision of greatness within God and that we are not always triumphant in our struggles. Sometimes God wants to humble us with trials to teach us to depend on Him. (Merida, 2015) During these trials and tribulations we often look to others to encourage us and lift our spirits. We look for our community, our supporters, and our followers to find our way through troubling times and this is exactly what happened when Elijah goes to the mount of God (1 Kings 19:9-3). Not only did God provide Elijah with much needed nourishment to replenish his vigor but also God provided him with much needed companionship.

Replenished and restored with a new understanding of how God works the prophet left the mountain and finds Elisha. This is a parable of how God works to restore and renew our lives. God has a remarkable way in putting us on track and making us fruitful once again. In anointing Elisha, it allowed Elijah to carry on his message that will continue beyond his own life. Elijah knew it was not his job to fight well in the present but to prepare others for the future and God teaches us that no one is indispensable. (Merida, 2015)

This passing on of leadership allows Elisha to pick up the mantle or assume the leadership. This transference of prophetic power is evidenced in 1 Kings 19:20 which says, "He left the oxen, ran to follow Elijah." Elisha abandons everything and devotes his life to God. This is a powerful turn of events in history and this transference will be played out time and time

again throughout the life of Jesus and far beyond through modern day and in our current business climate.

### **Agent of Change**

Elisha became an agent of change, someone who took stock of the problem, and in response, effected some changes that improved the lives of individuals and communities. (Nantenaina, Raveloharimisy, & McWilliams, 2015) Just as Elisha meets the needs of people in his time, modern Christian leaders are called upon to confront issues in their organization and prepare them to respond in a time of need. We see this change in today's society. Whether it be a new chief executive officer of a Silicon Valley start-up or on a wilderness expedition where a new leader is called upon to take over in a crisis.

This ability for the agent of change to adopt, be prepared, committed to the mission, no matter what the calling, allows the new leader to build trust and encourage partnership. Change agent leadership creates the capacity and environment to move into this future while preserving values and core missions that make institutions strong. (Baer, Duin, & Bushway, 2015) Elisha's acts provide future Christian leaders with many lessons on becoming effective agents of change. (Nantenaina, et al., 2015) In understanding the story of Elisha, today's leaders can bring solutions to their organizations with passion, engagement, perseverance and advancement. This is a powerful motivator no matter what the struggle.

Surely not the level of prophets, but an example just the same, Kieffer (1984; as cited in Marks, 2015) offered an empowerment developmental model that can be applied to students. This model suggests that individuals go through four eras, including the era of entry, the era of advancement the era of incorporation, and the era of commitment. (Kieffer, 1984; as cited in Marks, 2015). This analogy could also be seen in Elijah as he struggled with depression and later

recognized that there was a vision for the future and that God would teach us to depend on Him. Merida (2015) proposes that Elijah's faith and prayer challenge us, but his spiritual collapse serves as a warning and provides wise council. Christian leaders of today can use this as a formidable testament in that if they put their trust in God, they can overcome anything, and this is a powerful tool to create meaningful and lasting change in any organization.

### **Conclusion**

In the end, as it says in 1 Kings 19-21 Elijah responded to the divine summons with obedience and travelled into the wilderness to anoint a successor. It took immense courage to reverse direction and retrace the steps of a journey that Elijah was never summoned to make and in doing so he rises to the highest level of a model and mentor. (Hens-Piazza, 2018) Modern leadership follow this example through succession and recruitment of new leaders to carry on the mission of the organization. While today's leaders do not have the prophetic powers to institute change in their communities, they do have the ability to build ownership so that they can lead individuals to take action in a credible way. (Mattis, 2001; as cited in Kelan, 2017) The lessons learned from Elijah and Elisha show that leaders should promote a culture of behavior that allows for effective change. Agents of change cannot accomplish their mission if they are inconsistent or not committed to the task and give up. (Nantenaina et al., 2015) They must press on no matter the difficulty and by doing so they may just prepare others for the future. Merida (2015) postulates that Jesus carried on this message as he trained others to take the good news to the nations after His ascension.

Interestingly every leader is confronted with what will happen next. In the case of this author, it would be what would happen if he transferred leadership during a wilderness expedition without a clear plan of what was to come. With a greater understanding of what lies

ahead, it will allow each of us direction of what is to come, no matter what the obstacle. This message is clear in Merida (2015) and becoming clearer as this author gains the knowledge and insight provided in his educational endeavors. Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV) is relevant as it says, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you or forsake you.”

### References

- Baer, L. L., Duin, A. H., Bushway, D. (2015). Change agent leadership. *Planning for Higher Education*, 43(3), 1-11. Retrieved <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1706580348?accountid=12085>
- Hens-Piazza, G. (2018). Dreams can delude, visions can deceive: Elijah's sojourn in the wilderness of Horeb (I kings 19:1–21). *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 48(1), 10-17.  
doi:10.1177/0146107917746577
- Kelan, E.K., Wratil, P. (2017). Post-heroic leadership, tempered radicalism and senior leaders as change agents for gender equality. *European Management Review*. 15(1) 5-18. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/emre.12117>
- Marks, L. (2015). Beyond service: Equipping change agents through community leadership education. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2015(148), 17-31.  
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- Merida, D. (2015). *Christ-centered exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings*. B&H Publishing Group.
- Nantenaina, L. Z., Raveloharimisy, J., McWilliams, K. (2015). The prophet Elisha as an agent of change for community development. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 9(2),

10-20. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1766242997?accountid=12085>

### Taking the Mantle: Annotated Bibliography

Baer, L. L., Duin, A. H., Bushway, D. (2015). Change agent leadership. *Planning for Higher Education*, 43(3), 1-11. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1706580348?accountid=12085>

This journal article was found on the JFL using an advanced search for “agent of change in leadership” and was found in the ProQuest database. The aim of the article was to examine change agent leadership and to identify the future needs and trends of this leadership model. The authors postulate that change leadership is based on the ability to build authenticity and be unshakable in their commitment in transformational education.

This author used this article to examine how Elisha’s acts provide future Christian leaders with many lessons on becoming effective agents of change.

The authors of the article are well cited. Baer has written 21 publications.

Whereas, Duin-Hill has been published 51 times and Bushway has been published thirteen times. The journal, *Planning for Higher Education* has been published since 2008 with its scope being in education. The journal has an impressive impact factor of 3.005 (2018) and has almost 700,000 downloads of its articles.

Hens-Piazza, G. (2018). Dreams can delude, visions can deceive: Elijah's sojourn in the wilderness of Horeb (1 Kings 19:1–21). *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 48(1), 10-17.  
doi:10.1177/0146107917746577

This journal article was found on the JFL using an advanced search for “1 Kings 19.” The journal article examined the history of Elijah as told in the book of 1 Kings and this

author used it to examine how modern leadership follows this example through succession and recruitment of new leaders to carry on the mission of the organization.

The author of the article is a professor of Biblical Studies at Jesuit School of Theology in Berkley, CA. She is also the author of a series of books. *The Journal of Bible and Culture* is a peer-reviewed quarterly journal containing articles written by scholars of biblical and theological studies. The journal has been in publication since 1971.

Kelan, E.K., Wratil, P. (2017). Post-heroic leadership, tempered radicalism and senior leaders as change agents for gender equality. *European Management Review*. 15(1) 5-18. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/emre.12117>

This journal article was found on the JFL using an advanced search for “change agents.” The aim of the article is to show how CEO’s as macro agents for gender equality can be conceptualized. (Kelan & Wratil, 2017) Their methodology was a qualitative approach relying on interviews with 20 global CEO’s and a literature review to develop a framework to conceptualized how these CEO’s fostered cultural change.

This author used the article to examine how today’s leaders do not have the prophetic powers to institute change in their communities, they do have the ability to build ownership so that they can lead individuals to take action in a credible way. Kelan is at the Cranfield School of Management at Cranfield University in the United Kingdom and has been published thirteen times. Wratil is with the President’s Project Group in Berlin, Germany and has been published just this one time. The journal, *European Management Review*, has a relatively low impact factor of just 1.600 (2018). The journal

covers a broad range of management topics on organizational theory, strategic leadership and managerial economics and has been published quarterly since 2004.

Marks, L. (2015). Beyond service: Equipping change agents through community leadership education. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2015(148), 17-31.  
doi:10.1002/yd.20150

This journal article was found on the JFL using an advanced search for “agents of change in leadership.” The aim of the study was to focus on one university’s effort to integrate civic engagement programs and leadership curriculum informed by empowerment theory, servant leadership and community organizing methodologies. (Marks, 2015) This author used this article to examine how this empowerment model can be compared to agents of change and servant-based leadership using Elisha’s work as an example.

The author is based at the Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership and Research at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is the author of just three publications. The journal is a special issue of *Engaging Youth in Leadership for Social and Political Change for The New Directions for Student Leadership* that has an aim of exploring leadership of interest to high school and college educators.

Merida, D. (2015). *Christ-centered exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings*. B&H Publishing Group.

Merida’s (2015) book was the primary source used for this paper. In examining the stories of Elijah and Elisha and how agents of change, God’s message and the effects on that in today’s leadership. The book brings together theology and practice in a way that

allows for extended commentary in a Christ centered way. This author used the source to examine God's message to Elijah on the mount as well as how Elisha comes into play in 1 Kings 19. Merida is the lead pastor of a church in Raleigh, NC, and holds a Ph.D. in preaching from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where he serves as an associate professor of Preaching. He is the author of three books.

Nantenaina, L. Z., Raveloharimisy, J., McWilliams, K. (2015). The prophet Elisha as an agent of change for community development. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 9(2), 10-20. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1766242997?accountid=12085>

This journal article was the first source that was read for this paper and it provided a baseline for the overview of Elijah and Elisha and how their leadership can be contextualized in today's society with modern Christian leaders. This journal article was found on the JFL using an advanced search for "Elijah 1 Kings 19." It was found in the ProQuest Central database. The aim of the journal article is to examine how the Prophet Elisha's actions as he dealt with different issues that occurred in his community.

The journal authors, Nantenaina et al., come from varying research background and this was Nantenaina's first published work. The other two authors are well published. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* is published in the United States and its aim is to stimulate inquiry that interplay tensions of Christian leaders and their communities.