

**The Global Leadership of Dr. Denis Mukwege Through Vincentian Virtues**

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### **Author Biography**

Houssam Eddine Al Tibi (also known as Sam Tibi) is an educator and Ph.D. student in Leadership and Policy who is committed to service, ethical leadership, and student-centred education. He holds two master's degrees, one in Business Administration in Finance and one in Education from Niagara University. His first 10 years of professional experience were in administrative and leadership roles in hospitality and banking. He has more than 17 years of experience in education at the secondary and post-secondary levels at Canadian and American International educational institutions, including 5 years in educational management.

His professional and personal life reflect key Vincentian values. Simplicity is shown in his focus on meaningful relationships and everyday engagement with students and family. He participates in extracurricular activities such as business clubs, student competitions, and inter-teacher-student sports games. He also values family life by spending time with his children, taking them to parks, and cooking for them, focusing on joy and connection rather than complexity. Therefore, Sam knows when to teach, speak, play, or act. Sam tries to choose the right way to do things.

Humility is reflected in his continuous learning journey. He completed an MBA in Finance to strengthen his knowledge in banking, then pursued a Master's in Education to improve his teaching practice. He is now completing a Ph.D. in Leadership and Policy to develop his leadership skills and contribute to solving real community problems. He believes learning is a lifelong process.

Meekness guides his approach to discipline and leadership. He believes that anger leads to more conflict and damage, like a snowball effect. For this reason, he applies restorative justice

practices when dealing with student behavior, focusing on dialogue, understanding, and positive relationships instead of punishment.

Mortification is demonstrated in his ethical decision-making. In 2009, he left a career in banking after recognizing unethical financial practices, including risky lending to the Lebanese government. This decision reflects his commitment to integrity and social responsibility, especially considering the 2019 financial crisis in Lebanon, which caused a bank run at all Lebanese banks, where the Lebanese currency depreciated and lost 98% of its value, and depositors lost access to their 80 billion US dollars, and Lebanese citizens suffered economic hardship (Lebanese liquidity crisis, n.d.).

Zeal is evident in his strong dedication to student success. He actively supports students, especially those at risk, by providing extra help before school, during lunch, and after school. He is committed to helping all students improve their motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. Moreover, he supports his students with their university and job applications by writing recommendation letters, especially since he has recently served at Ontario Independent schools, which has 100% university placement rate for grade 12 students (The Reading School, 2021).

His research focuses on teachers' leadership and its impact on student motivation, engagement, achievement, retention, and school improvement, with academic interests in constructivist theory, self-determination theory, and motivation theory. In his professional practice, Sam applies transformational leadership frameworks when reviewing school vision and mission statements, ensuring alignment with strategies, measurable outcomes, and continuous school improvement. He has participated in school accreditation committees and contributed to policy development, including writing and revising policies to meet accreditation standards as

well as health and safety requirements. His work reflects a strong commitment to ethical leadership, institutional accountability, and the continuous improvement of educational systems to better serve students and communities.

## **The Global Leadership of Dr. Denis Mukwege Through Vincentian Virtues**

### **Introduction**

#### ***Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo***

Sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a severe and ongoing human rights crisis, particularly in the eastern provinces such as North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri. It has been widely documented that sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war, especially during and after the Congo War, with armed groups and militias targeting civilians to terrorize communities and assert control over territories (Baaz & Stern, 2013; Peterman et al., 2011).

The scale of the problem is significant, although exact numbers are difficult to determine due to underreporting caused by stigma, fear, and limited access to reporting mechanisms. Survivors, primarily women and girls, but also men and boys, often experience severe physical injuries, long-term psychological trauma, and social exclusion (Kelly et al., 2012; Mukwege & Nangini, 2009). These impacts extend beyond individuals, affecting families and community structures.

Several factors contribute to the persistence of sexual violence, including ongoing armed conflict, weak governance, and widespread impunity. Perpetrators are rarely held accountable, which reinforces cycles of violence (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Poverty and displacement also increase vulnerability, especially in internally displaced populations.

Efforts to respond to this crisis involve medical care, psychosocial support, legal advocacy, and prevention programs. The United Nations and other international organizations work alongside local actors to address both immediate needs and long-term structural issues (Human Rights Watch, 2009). A leading figure in this effort is Denis Mukwege, who founded

Panzi Hospital, where thousands of survivors have received comprehensive care (Mukwege & Nangini, 2009).

### ***Dr. Denis Mukwege***

Dr. Denis Mukwege is a human rights activist, Congolese gynecologist, and Nobel Peace Prize co-recipient (Nobel Prize Outreach, 2018a). His work with survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo has earned him worldwide recognition. He founded the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu in 1999, where he treated thousands of women who were subjected to extreme violence during armed conflict (Mukwege, 2019; Mukwege & Nangini, 2009). But his leadership is not limited to clinical medicine. His advocacy for justice, accountability, and structural reform has made him a prominent figure in the global effort to end sexual violence as an instrument of war (Nobel Prize Outreach, 2018b; Mukwege, 2019).

Therefore, Dr. Mukwege merits a Vincentian analysis, who has demonstrated a consistent commitment to the dignity of marginalized communities and to structural change. His research encompasses not only individual-level service, such as comprehensive medical and psychosocial care, but also involves a systemic approach that challenges international institutions, governments, and armed groups to address impunity and gender-based violence (Peterman, Palermo, & Bredenkamp, 2011).

### ***Statement of the Thesis***

The chapter argues that Dr. Denis Mukwege is an example of Vincentian global leadership and the New Paradigm of Global Leadership, which are necessary for an interconnected, complex, and dynamic world. Moreover, the Vincentian virtues, simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification, and zeal, appear in Dr. Mukwege's leadership not only as moral values but also through his achievements, as he practiced these virtues in dealing with

complex and interconnected situations and systemic injustice. In this constantly evolving, highly interconnected global society, Dr. Mukwege demonstrates that global leadership develops through understanding his role by demonstrating his ability to manage interconnected, complex tasks. During his journey, he had to navigate medical systems, political institutions, and international advocacy networks, while maintaining close relational solidarity with survivors of violence. At the same time, his work reflects continuous learning, transparency, innovation in trauma care, and global empathy toward marginalized populations, which show Dr. Mukwege's human capacities required for global society leaders. In addition, his medical practice, international engagement, and community empowerment initiatives made his journey an example of the Vincentian charism of service, solidarity, and systemic reform, showing that effective global leadership today requires both moral values like the Vincentian virtues and understanding the role and human capacities in a complex world.

### **Vincentian Virtues as Analytical Framework**

#### ***Overview of Vincentian virtues***

These virtues are fundamental values derived from the teachings of Vincent de Paul. They are part of the Niagara University mission. These values guide ethical conduct, social service, and engagement in activities. These virtues are important when working with poor and marginalized populations (Niagara University, n.d.). According to Vincentian philosophy, there are five virtues: Simplicity, Humility, Meekness, Mortification, Zeal.

Simplicity means being straightforward, and simplicity requires one to be truthful, direct and unambiguous. The focus is on honesty and morality. The absence of complexity and manipulation is avoided. Simplicity involves using judgment, knowing when to speak and when

not, and is often associated with the correct approach. “In actual practice, this virtue is about choosing the right way to do things” (Niagara University, n.d.).

Humility means being humble. Humility involves a modest self-perception, includes recognizing personal limits, and being a servant and willing to acquire knowledge. Additionally, humility in leadership promotes respect, collaboration, and ongoing education. Jesus said, “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” (Niagara University, n.d.).

Meekness means calm and patient. The emphasis is on being compassionate, sociable, and sensitive. It's important in difficult situations. It fosters positive relationships and a supportive environment through this virtue. Jesus asked God, “Grant me a kindly and benign spirit...” (Niagara University, n.d.).

Mortification means self-discipline, the process of managing one's own desires. Mortification entails making compromises to build positive relationships and supportive environments by showing commitment and responsibility." And valuing moral values over short-term gains. Jesus calls us to follow him even unto death” (Niagara University, n.d.).

Zeal means passion and dedication to a cause. Especially helping those who are in need, it is about service.' Balance is necessary for continuity. Jesus said, “Let us beg God to enkindle in our hearts a desire to serve him...” (Niagara University, n.d.).

Thus, the Vincentian virtues provide a framework for ethical leadership, service, and social justice, helping individuals align their actions with human dignity and the common good.

### ***Connection to Dr. Mukwege leadership***

The five Vincentian virtues are used to examine the leadership of Denis Mukwege in this chapter.

### ***Simplicity***

He demonstrates simplicity by being honest and straightforward. He uses public speaking to oppose injustice and impunity, without resorting to political manipulation (Mukwege, 2019).

### *Humility*

He focuses his attention on the dignity of survivors rather than his own merits, even after being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (Nobel Peace Outreach, 2018a). His care approach acknowledges the independence of survivors and incorporates psychosocial support (Mukwege & Nangini, 2009).

### *Meekness*

Courage is demonstrated through disciplined strength and nonviolent courage. He persists in his mission with moral conviction despite threats and an assassination attempt (Nobel Prize Outreach, 2018a).

### *Mortification*

His self-discipline and willingness to sacrifice are the reasons for his mortification. Despite political pressure and personal risk, he remains in the Democratic Republic of Congo and continues to report facts (Mukwege, 2019).

### *Zeal*

Zeal appears in his commitment to justice and as a long-term advocate for survivors of sexual violence. His sustained involvement in structural reform at the local and global levels is evidence of an organized effort (Mukwege, 2019; Nobel Prize Outreach, 2018b).

## **Vincentian Charism: Service, Solidarity and Systemic Change**

Dr. Denis Mukwege's leadership is an example of the Vincentian charism that emphasizes service, solidarity, and systemic change.

### *Service*

Dr. Mukwege demonstrates the comprehensive approach to care at Panzi Hospital through his service. In addition to treating the survivors' health, Dr. Mukwege provides psychological, legal, and economic support to survivors (Mukwege & Nangini, 2009).

### ***Solidarity***

Bukavu was where Dr. Mukwege decided to live and work among his fellow citizens, a gesture of solidarity. His leadership style is not based on distance, but on providing companionship and close supervision to victims (Nobel Prize Outreach, 2018a).

### ***Systemic Change***

Dr. Mukwege is a leader who has initiated systemic change, moving from treating survivors to becoming a global policy influencer. His speeches at the United Nations emphasize the need for accountability and legal reform (Mukwege, 2019).

## **Brief Chapter Outline**

### ***Introduction***

- The background of the conflict-related sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Introduction of Dr. Mukwege
- Statement of thesis

### ***The Vincentian Framework for Global Leadership***

- Overview of Vincentian virtues
- Connection to Dr. Mukwege leadership
  - Founding of Panzi Hospital
  - Survivor-centred care model
  - Assassination attempt and continued service

- Moral restraint and disciplined resilience
- International speeches and policy engagement
- Nobel Peace Prize recognition
- Influence on international awareness and accountability
- Training of professionals
- Community empowerment initiatives
- Indirect impact on education and human development
- Ethical global leadership example
- Integration of compassion and structural reform

### ***Conclusion***

- Restatement of argument
- Implications for leadership rooted in virtue and justice

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