

The ABC Whole Leadership Model

Why character without practice is sentiment, practice without character is performance, and how Galatians 5 unifies them into a single harnessed framework.

Dr. J Rodriguez, Founder, Troika Ministries • 2026-07-09 • NIV84 (primary)

"Three horses, one direction. That is the troika. Attitude, Behavior, and Character. No horse pulls alone."

"The fruit of the Spirit is singular for a reason. The Spirit forms a coherent life — not a collection of traits."

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o. The Epidemic This Paper Answers

Symptom 02 — A Famine of Formation names the wound; this paper supplies the vocabulary the famine has never had. The diagnosis in the Series Preface states it plainly: *"Nothing in the field measures the one thing whose absence causes the collapse: character... You cannot heal what you refuse to measure, and you cannot measure what you have no framework to name."*

The ABC Model is that framework. It does not describe three separate skills to acquire. It names the three inseparable dimensions of a single formed life — and it shows precisely why the leadership field's usual substitutes (charisma standing in for Attitude, competence standing in for Behavior, reputation standing in for Character) fail to produce what only a genuinely unified life can produce.

I. The Thesis

Character without practice is sentiment. Practice without character is performance. Only Attitude, Behavior, and Character moving together — as one harnessed, Spirit-formed life — constitute the thing Scripture actually calls formation.

A leader can feel deeply convicted and still do nothing that costs them anything — that is sentiment, and Scripture calls it dead faith. A leader can perform disciplined, impressive behavior while the interior remains unformed — that is performance, and Scripture calls it hypocrisy. Troika's answer is not a third option added alongside these two; it is the refusal to accept either one as a substitute for the whole.

II. Why This Model Exists — Rooted in Original Intent

The ABC Model is not a leadership technique Troika invented and then went looking for Scripture to support. It is the *content* of an older and deeper doctrine: **Original Intent** — the conviction, canonized as TaMOS's founding theology, that God's intent has always been fellowship, and that the whole of Scripture is the record of a Father who prepared a garden, a Son who prepared a place, and a Spirit who is even now preparing us for that place, so that we in turn might prepare a people for it (echoing Luke 1:17 — "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord").

That fourth beat — preparing a people — is not abstract. It has content. It looks like something. **ABC is the answer to the question Original Intent leaves open: prepared *how*?**

- **Attitude** is the inward reorientation Paul names as the starting point of the preparation itself: *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will"* (Romans 12:2, NIV84). This is not mood management. It is the mind being made ready — the first movement of a person being prepared for the place the Son went ahead to prepare.
- **Behavior** is what that readiness looks like lived out among others — the visible "putting on" Paul describes: *"and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"* (Ephesians 4:24, NIV84). A prepared person does not remain privately prepared; they become visibly different in how they treat the people around them.
- **Character** is what remains true of a person once the Spirit's ongoing preparation has had time to do its slow work — the durable, tested core Paul describes as an ongoing transformation, not an event: *"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"* (2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV84).

Read this way, the ABC Model is not a parallel framework sitting next to Original Intent doctrine. **It is Original Intent doctrine, given hands and feet.** The Father prepared a place; the Spirit is preparing a person; the person, formed in Attitude, Behavior, and Character together, becomes someone capable of preparing others — which is the whole of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) in miniature. A leadership model with no doctrine underneath it is technique. This one exists because the doctrine required it.

III. Three Horses, One Direction — the Model Itself

The metaphor is deliberately agricultural and pre-industrial: a troika, the Russian three-horse harness, distributes weight across three animals running in the same direction at the same time. No horse pulls alone, and no horse pulls *first* — they are co-equal, concurrent, and inseparable, never sequential stages to move through and leave behind.

Dimension

Role

Fruit of the Spirit

What It Governs

Attitude	Inner posture / internal compass	Love, Joy, Peace	Climate — how a leader interprets reality before responding to it
Behavior	Visible expression / daily practice	Patience, Kindness, Goodness	Culture — what people experience day after day
Character	Moral core / enduring foundation	Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control	Credibility — what holds under pressure and in private

Attitude shapes climate immediately. Behavior shapes culture over time. Character shapes credibility across seasons — which is precisely why Character is the dimension every shortcut in the leadership epidemic tries hardest to skip. It is the slowest of the three to become visible and the most expensive to fake convincingly for long.

IV. Why Galatians 5 Unifies Rather Than Lists

Paul's catalogue of the fruit of the Spirit is easy to misread as nine independent virtues a person might possess in varying combinations — strong in kindness, weak in self-control, and so on, like a scorecard with nine separate columns. The grammar itself resists that reading. *Karpos* — fruit — is singular in the Greek, not plural. Paul does not write "the fruits of the Spirit are." He writes of one fruit, with nine expressions:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23, NIV84

One Spirit forms one coherent life — not a collection of traits a person can stock up on individually.

This is why the ABC model insists Attitude, Behavior, and Character operate concurrently rather than sequentially: they are not nine items to check off a list, but three facets of the single fruit the Spirit produces when a person is genuinely walking in step with Him:

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

Galatians 5:16, 18, NIV84

And the closing phrase of the fruit passage — "*against such things there is no law*" — is not incidental. A person who has been formed, rather than merely instructed, does not need an external rule constraining their behavior after the fact. The law's job was to restrain what an unformed heart would otherwise do. A truly harnessed Attitude-Behavior-Character life needs no such restraint, because the restraint has become internal — which is the entire aim of formation over mere compliance.

V. Sentiment vs. Performance — The Two Failure Modes

Scripture names both counterfeits of whole formation with unusual precision, and each maps directly onto a specific way of un-harnessing the three horses.

Character (or Attitude) claimed without Behavior is sentiment — and James calls it dead:

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:14–17, NIV84

This is the leader who speaks fluently about formation, quotes the right Scriptures, feels genuine conviction — and never lets any of it cost them anything observable. Attitude without Behavior is not humility; it is a private feeling with no public fruit, which James says cannot save anyone, including the person holding it.

Behavior performed without Character is performance — and Jesus calls it hypocrisy:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Matthew 23:27–28, NIV84

This is the leader whose visible practice is disciplined, impressive, even by-the-book — while the interior remains dead. Behavior alone can be manufactured indefinitely with enough willpower and enough audience. It cannot, by itself, become Character, and eventually the gap between the whitewash and the bones becomes public — which is precisely the mechanism behind Symptom 01 of the epidemic, public collapse.

Paul supplies the third failure mode: gifting and even sacrifice, performed without love, amount to nothing at all:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1–3, NIV84

Paul is describing a leader with extraordinary Behavior — eloquence, knowledge, even martyrdom — who nonetheless produces *nothing*, because Attitude (love, the first fruit named in Galatians 5:22) was never present underneath it. Skill and sacrifice are not formation. They are noise, however impressive, without the Spirit's love as their source.

VI. Why Both Alone Fail the Vocation

Section II established that ABC exists to serve Original Intent's vocation: preparing a people for the place already prepared. Both failure modes above fail that vocation in different ways, not just morally but *functionally*.

Dead faith (sentiment) prepares no one, because it produces nothing anyone else can receive, imitate, or be formed by. A person's private conviction, however sincere, cannot become the "many witnesses" Paul describes as necessary for reproducing faithful leaders: "*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others*" (2 Timothy 2:2, NIV84). Witness requires visibility. Sentiment has none.

Hypocrisy (performance) actively damages the vocation, because it trains the people watching to imitate the wrong thing — polished Behavior detached from real Attitude and Character — and eventually collapses in a way that makes the whole enterprise of formation look like theater. This is the direct link back to the companion paper, *Formation Must Match Responsibility*: an organization that mistakes performance for formation is the same organization that later discovers it scaled influence faster than character.

Only the whole — Attitude renewed, Behavior visibly changed, Character durable under pressure — reproduces itself the way John 15 describes:

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.'

John 15:4–5, NIV84

Fruit that remains, and multiplies, requires abiding — the ongoing, Spirit-sustained connection that produces all three dimensions together. There is no abiding shortcut that yields Behavior or Character without also yielding Attitude; the vine does not grow branches selectively.

VII. How Troika Builds This Structurally

The ABC Model is not merely taught in a single course; it is the architecture underneath everything Troika builds:

- **The 3×3×3 Academy structure teaches all three pillars simultaneously, never sequentially** — nine virtue courses across Attitude, Behavior, and Character running concurrently at every level, because sequential teaching would itself contradict the doctrine of one unified fruit.

- **The Troika Score reads all three dimensions together and flags fracture, not failure**, when a 20+ point gap opens between them — Attitude far ahead of Character, for instance — treating the gap as a signal to address, not a verdict on the person.
- **Formation content is designed to expose gaps safely rather than publicly** — the 4th Day Reset, structured retreats, and peer cohorts create bounded pressure specifically so a Behavior-without-Character gap surfaces in a setting built to strengthen the person, echoing the companion paper's principle that pressure reveals formation; it does not create it.
- **Neurobiology confirms why the three cannot be rushed independently of one another** — Attitude maps to prefrontal-cortex regulation, Behavior to basal-ganglia habit circuits, and Character to the integrated neural systems (Siegel's FACES: Flexibility, Adaptability, Coherence, Energy, Stability) that only form when the first two are sustained together over time. You cannot neurologically shortcut your way to Character through Behavior alone, any more than you can shortcut your way to a habit through Attitude alone.

VIII. Conclusion

The leadership epidemic does not lack skilled people. It lacks a vocabulary for the thing skill was never meant to replace. The ABC Model gives that vocabulary — not as a corporate competency framework borrowed and baptized, but as the practical shape of a much older doctrine: that God prepared a place, the Spirit is preparing us, and the preparation the Spirit is doing has content — Attitude renewed, Behavior transformed, Character proven — because a people prepared for communion with God must actually be the kind of people capable of that communion, not merely people who talk or perform as though they were.

"Three horses, one direction. That is the troika. Attitude, Behavior, and Character. No horse pulls alone."

Sentiment alone pulls nothing. Performance alone pulls the wrong direction. Only the harnessed three arrive.

Scripture Reference List

- Romans 12:2 — transformed by the renewal of the mind (Attitude as the first movement of preparation)
- Ephesians 4:22-24 — put off the old, be renewed, put on the new (Behavior as visible preparation)
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 — being transformed into the same image, from the Spirit (Character as ongoing transformation)
- Galatians 5:16-18 — walk by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, not under the law
- Galatians 5:22-23 — the fruit (singular) of the Spirit; against such things there is no law

- James 2:14-17 — faith without works is dead (Attitude/Character claimed without Behavior = sentiment)
- Matthew 23:27-28 — whitewashed tombs (Behavior performed without Character = hypocrisy)
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 — gifts and sacrifice without love are nothing (Behavior without Attitude = noise)
- John 15:4-5 — abiding in the vine as the condition for fruit that remains and multiplies
- 2 Timothy 2:2 — entrusting to faithful, competent-to-teach others (the reproducibility test)
- Luke 1:17 — preparing a people for the Lord (the Original Intent vocation ABC serves)
- Matthew 28:19-20 — the Great Commission as the macro form of "preparing a people"

All Scripture quoted from the New International Version, 1984 edition (NIV84), per Troika Ministries' translation standard settled 2026-07-08. Converted from the original Lexham English Bible (LEB) citations, 2026-07-09.

Canon Alignment

Existing canon	How this paper reinforces it
The Epidemic (Series Preface)	Direct answer to Symptom 02 — supplies the missing vocabulary the diagnosis names
Original Intent Narrative	ABC is presented as the content of the Spirit's ongoing preparation, not a parallel framework — §II
Formation Must Match Responsibility (Paper 1)	§VI names the functional link: hypocrisy/performance is what later becomes "scaling influence faster than character"
Troika Leadership Model — Canonical Reference	This paper is the treatise-voice companion to the existing full ABC canon document
Neurobiology and Biblical Integration canon	§VII cites PFC/basal ganglia/FACES integration as the mechanism behind why the three dimensions cannot be formed independently
Troika Score	Positioned again as the instrument that reads fracture between dimensions as signal, not verdict

Canonization Record

- **Originated by:** Dr. J (Jose G. Rodriguez, Ph.D.)
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