reviewing
leadership

a christian evaluation of current approaches

second edition

bernice m. ledbetter, robert j. banks,
and david c. greenhalgh

foreword by max de pree

BakerAcademic
a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

16   17   18   19   20   21   22   7   6   5   4   3   2   1

In keeping with biblical principles of creation stewardship, Baker Publishing Group advocates the responsible use of our natural resources. As a member of the Green Press Initiative, our company uses recycled paper when possible. The text paper of this book is composed in part of post-consumer waste.

green press INITIATIVE

To
our friend and mentor, Max De Pree,
who taught us a great deal about leadership
through his writings, example, and influence.
—Bernice M. Ledbetter and Robert J. Banks

To
the colleagues and students of Eastern University's PhD program who
have inspired and challenged me over the years.
—David C. Greenhalgh

contents

foreword

I don't read many books on leadership, but the practice of good and ethical leadership is something I have thought a lot about. During my years at Herman Miller Inc., especially as CEO, I tried to integrate my work and my faith—that's always been important to me and still is.

This book surveys the evolution of understanding about leadership and asks important questions about faith and leading that are necessary to consider if leadership is to have a future. I have come to believe that asking the right questions may be more important than getting to the answer. Questions help us to bring to the surface what is most important, and this book does just that.

Reviewing Leadership helps us to gain an understanding of the influences on leadership, things such as culture, timing, events in one's personal history, and one's faith. Leadership is a complex enterprise, and we do well to pay attention to influencing factors.

Peter Drucker once said that leadership and faith share a common core. They are both acts of intention, and this leads to integrity. Integrity in leadership is at an all-time low, and people need a reason to trust in leadership once again. Leadership is barren and hollow when it does not have integrity at its core. The examples of faithful leaders offered in *Reviewing Leadership* give us good reason to hope that the core of leadership remains intact for those leaders who fight the good fight of faith and remain strong.

The authors of this book are right to discuss the spiritual importance of leadership, which cannot be overstated. Leadership has always had a spiritual dimension, and now is the time to underscore the importance of this vital leadership component. Good, effective, moral leaders have a compass, something that guides them from the inside out, and faith is a good candidate for providing a clear set of moral principles to guide one's leading and following. The authors touch on the vital importance of the character of a leader by

ix

discussing the ripple effect of leadership on people, projects, and processes in organizations. In fact, the character of a leader may be one of the most important factors in determining the success of an organization because it really does spread throughout an entire organization, helping it to be beautifully whole or sadly fractured and broken.

Reviewing Leadership is a book about leading from one's spiritual center, which is the right thing to do and is not as easy as it sounds. It is really a journey of discovery about oneself and God and how one intends to lead based on who one intends to be.

The authors, whom I consider my friends, have offered some ways to think about this challenge that I encourage you to consider.

<div align="right">Max De Pree</div>

preface to the second edition

Since the first edition of this book the field of leadership has only grown deeper and wider. There continue to be many, many books on leadership published each year. Yet as time has marched forward little attention has been given to the theological dimension and evaluation of current views on leadership. As the cultural importance of leadership has expanded, the topic has gained greater relevance for this series on engaging culture.

This book intentionally seeks to develop a substantially theological—rather than purely practical or even biblical—assessment of current leadership literature. It does this from a biblical base and with the conviction that what is best theologically ultimately leads to what is best practically. As the old but little appreciated adage goes, there is nothing more hands-on than a good theory. While we deal with leadership theory in this volume, we also attempt to critique and evaluate these ideas through the lens of theology. Thus, this book has a particular and unique shape. It is a summary of academic approaches and concrete experiences as much as it is a fruit of biblical investigation and reflection on our own leadership learning and experience.

Moreover, we believe this book is an exercise in cultural analysis and theological exploration. It is derived from historical and current writings on leadership and personal observations of past and present role models. Behind this diverse range of influences lie the convictions that, however normative biblical revelation may be, truth comes from God in a variety of ways, and all truth is God's truth.

The introduction provides the historical backdrop for this book: the origins that led to the writing of the first edition. We thought it would be helpful to provide the context behind the initial impetus for this work. The introduction

xi

concludes with areas for future investigation, which we address in this second edition.

The opening chapter begins by acknowledging the ongoing interest in leadership as a topic of investigation. A review of the history of the study of leadership provides insights and reveals limitations in our understanding of the theory and practice of leadership. Definitions and the distinction between leadership and management along with the ideas associated with followership are considered. Chapter one foreshadows several themes that are addressed within the book, including ways culture influences an understanding of leadership and, of course, the intersections between leadership, Christianity, and spirituality.

The second chapter offers a brief historical perspective on leadership, beginning with Jewish views on leadership and followed by Paul's innovative understanding and practice of leading. It then surveys historical models of leadership in the church, each containing a theological dimension. Application for leadership today is drawn from this historical and theological discussion.

The third chapter explores the religious, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of leadership by examining implicit and explicit expressions of spiritual and ethical leadership with implications for organizations. Through popular writing and significant examples, the implicit themes of spirituality and religiosity in leadership are presented. After addressing explicit approaches to spirituality and leadership, the text discusses specifically Christian approaches.

The fourth chapter begins by surveying a number of popular writings on leadership that include an overtly religious dimension. From this it moves on to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a number of leading theological perspectives on leadership revolving around Jesus, biblical life stories, and the Trinity, the latter of which informs an understanding of women in leadership and the use of power.

The fifth chapter discusses translating ideas about leadership into practice. It examines the roles of imagination, emotion, and wisdom with the goal of a more holistic understanding of leadership and then turns to three key aspects of character: faithfulness, integrity, and a servant-like attitude.

The sixth chapter explores leadership development and spiritual development and addresses this question: How does one learn to lead ethically from a solid moral grounding? The themes of moral stress and resilience are discussed. Finally, a biblical understanding of leadership legacy is presented.

The seventh chapter considers the topic of leadership at the senior level by examining governance and the perils of success. The practice of faith-based leadership is considered through the lens of major religious views on what it means to lead.

The last chapter considers some exemplary role models of Christian leadership. These include examples from within the realms of national leadership, leadership in a parachurch context, leadership in the city, leadership in the marketplace and the wider community, and leadership in a congregation. The case studies demonstrate the potential Christians have in various walks of life to articulate and embody a distinctive and integrated Christian approach. The book concludes with some reflections on how to nurture leadership of this kind for the future.

In writing this book, Rob and Bernice are grateful for our previous work expressed through leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary and founding the Max De Pree Center for Leadership, where we had the great privilege of working with Max De Pree. This work partnership gave rise to our collaboration on the first edition. David entered our fold through our affiliation with the International Leadership Association, and we are grateful for his partnership and insightful critique of the first edition and substantive contribution to this second edition. For all three of us our teaching opportunities have spanned the globe: from the Centre for the History of Christian Thought & Experience, Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia); to the Graziadio School of Business and Management at Pepperdine University (Malibu, California); to Eastern University (St. Davids, Pennsylvania). Our teaching has certainly shaped our thinking and practice of leadership; we are grateful to our many students who have helped us refine our thinking about the ideas in this book and made us better teachers and scholars. We also want to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the series editors, Bill Dyrness and Robert K. Johnston of Fuller Theological Seminary, as well as our executive editor at Baker Publishing Group, Robert N. Hosack, for their enthusiastic support for extending our work into the second edition of this book.

introduction

We begin with background concerning the trends that led to the writing of the first edition of *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* to set the context for the second edition.

Historical Background: The Faith at Work (FAW) Movement

It is important to mention the work of David Miller, project director for the Faith & Work Initiative at Princeton University and author of the book *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*.[1] The FAW movement is a lay-led, non-church-based movement that began as a means for people of faith, mainly Christians, to address a central question: What does it mean to be a person of faith in the marketplace? Feeling that the institutional church did not do much to address this concern, laypeople began meeting together for support and to share ideas. This movement began in the late 1800s and continues to the present. However, from the beginning of this movement this notion of faith and work faced a particular and serious challenge: how to connect religion with economics, in which economic gain is seen as contrary to encouragement to live a simple life, not focused on material gain. Coauthor Robert J. Banks was a very significant leader in this movement in Australia and later in the United States.

Fast-forward to the 1980s, when the FAW movement included a movement within a movement that came to be known as the Ministry of the Laity. This movement sought to connect Sunday with Monday. The central question for this phase of the movement was: How does faith inform work? How can we see the laity as involved in a kind of ministry Monday through Friday? This period was fraught with tension, as the church saw Ministry of the Laity more

in terms of how laypeople used their gifts to serve within the church, whereas the laity sought insight as to how one's faith gives meaning to one's work.

Banks was integral to the Ministry of the Laity movement, and much of his work and research focused on empowering laity even in the context of training people for ordained ministry.[2] Banks wanted ordained clergy to understand the importance of emergent leadership in the laity.

In the next turn in the movement, going into the 1990s and the early part of the twenty-first century, we see the central question relating to the capacity to integrate faith with work. In this stage of FAW there is a greater opening to speak about faith in the marketplace. This newfound openness is in part thanks to baby boomers who hold top positions in organizations; this generation seeks—though not always successfully—integration, including faith and spirituality into their work, particularly in applying faith in practical ways to daily life.

This recent turn toward greater openness to spirituality and faith in the workplace is further confirmed by Andre Delbecq, noted scholar of management and spirituality. He identified a clear shift in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the discussion of faith integration with work through his teaching at Santa Clara University and his consulting with tech leaders in Silicon Valley, who expressed a longing for increased spiritual integration in life and work.[3]

Theoretical Struggle: Gaining Legitimacy

In many ways, practice precedes theory. As we will see, oftentimes practitioners bring new insight and pressing questions to the foreground, thus providing the impetus for advancing theory in the academic context. Because practitioners began asking questions about ethics, leadership, and spirituality, acceptance and then research in these areas eventually flourished. It is quite interesting to note that ethics, leadership, and spirituality each fought an uphill battle to be recognized in the academy. There was a time when ethics was considered the purview of the philosophy department, and not in any substantial way was it related to business, management, or leadership.

Ethics began to enter the business school curriculum, and thus joined the conversation concerning the workplace and management, in the 1980s and 1990s. *People Magazine* in 1978 featured a story about the dean at Stanford University, who was lauded for introducing ethics into the MBA curriculum, which was unheard of at the time. The article cites increased enrollment as a result of this decision![4] And a page from popular media in 1990 highlights the importance of asking moral questions about business conduct.[5] The same

vexing challenges continue to appear on the front pages of our e-newspapers today, and we continue to wonder: Can ethics be taught? Can moral behavior be learned? The point is, ethics moved beyond the philosophy department to practitioners in the workplace vis-à-vis the business school, and this was a very important shift.

Similarly, leadership studies in many ways found its beginning with the seminal work *Leadership* by James MacGregor Burns in 1978.[6] However, Frederick Fiedler's work in the 1960s, from an organizational psychology perspective on a theory of leadership effectiveness, was certainly important as well.[7] During the 1990s Joseph Rost made a major contribution to the field of leadership studies.[8] In that same decade (1992) the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, the premier undergraduate leadership program in the nation, opened, and Peter Northouse published his first edition of *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (1997).[9] The 1980s and 1990s were crucial for the study of leadership to gain a foothold in academia. Most now consider leadership a discipline, and output from programs like that at Eastern University continue to add substantive research to the field.

One of the chief concerns levied against leadership studies is the lack of a central theory. This comes from the scientific approach that claims all substantive knowledge contained within a discipline must be based on a central theory and, further, that standard measures are needed to substantiate claims; results must be replicable and generalizable. Fair enough, if the focus of study is splitting the atom or measuring the speed of light. In 2005 James MacGregor Burns and a team of top scholars collaborated to develop a general theory of leadership; their book, *The Quest for a General Theory of Leadership*, appeared in 2006.[10] However, the team was unable to develop a general theory of leadership because of the multiple contingencies that surround the phenomenon of leadership. Still, leadership studies has found its place within the academy, building a multidisciplinary base from the fields of psychology, sociology, philosophy, communications, and political science.

It should be noted as well that not all that long ago leadership was considered values-free—that values were not part of leadership and that those two concepts should be kept separate.[11] This debate continues up to the present. The thought of even discussing faith, spirituality, or religion in the secular classroom was unheard of in the 1980s, with the exception of, say, in the religious studies department, but even there no attempt was made to connect faith with daily life, much less leadership. Around the year 2000 scholarship in the area of faith, spirituality, and religion in management and work began to take off.

Clearly the 1980s and 1990s, leading into the turn of the century, brought a broadening of thoughtful research-based discussion of these three important

areas—ethics, leadership, and spirituality/faith/religion. As we welcomed the new millennium, ethics became common in business schools; leadership studies emerged as one of the fastest-growing disciplines in the academy, and spirituality became part of the public discourse and even part of curricula in many academic departments, including medicine, nursing, and business.

It was against this backdrop that we set out to write the first edition of *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches*.[12] Clearly a door was opening, and because the intellectual discourse was emerging we stepped into this interdisciplinary discussion. In so doing we set out to think about leadership faith/spirituality from a decidedly biblical and theological perspective to advance an understanding of leadership, ethics, and faith. We sought to create a substantive intersection between the business literature on leadership and biblical theology, and to do so at a deeper level, moving beyond personal motivation and inspiration, which were common in popular-media offerings at that time. To do this required collaboration across disciplines and academic departments that is unusual and rare, combining solid biblical theology with substantive leadership theory. We felt quite good that we accomplished what we set out to do.

Now that these heretofore radical fields of inquiry have matured considerably, what occupies the discourse at this disciplinary intersection? We would argue that the purpose of leadership continues to be a central concern. In a certain way this gets at the question of definitions of leadership. Many will be familiar with a common definition of leadership: influence toward goals, which implies that leadership ought to have a direct impact on organizational performance or some sort of outcome. However, research has been highly inconclusive on this critical point: Can we demonstrate that certain forms of leadership lead to certain organizational performance outcomes? The question remains open, which raises a further problematic question: If leadership does not affect organizational outcomes, is leadership needed? In our quest to put forward a determinative position for leadership we have perhaps shot ourselves in the proverbial foot insofar as much of our research on leadership has set out to prove scientifically that leaders have a direct impact on organizational performance, and while this is not altogether inappropriate, it certainly may be insufficient.

A group of Harvard researchers points out that early scholars in the field "were not concerned with leadership because of its ability to explain economic performance. Instead, leadership was deemed important because of its capacity to infuse purpose and meaning into the lives of individuals."[13] While economic performance was not irrelevant in the early stages of theory development of leadership, it simply was not the central focus. If we are to take a cue from our scholarly ancestors, then we must judge the importance of leadership's ability to infuse purpose and meaning into the organizational experience.

To answer the question of what the purpose of leadership is while considering leadership's role in advancing purpose and meaning, Max Weber wrote in 1946, "Modernization implied an ever increasing rationalization of all aspects of life, as the dry logic of bureaucratic institutions steadily replaced the meaning systems derived from the wonder and enchantment of religion, respect for tradition, or awe of charisma."[14] Weber is suggesting that efficiency in organizations had come to be seen as a cultural norm for measuring value—efficiency was, we might argue, a sort of taken-for-granted social good. As organizations became more bureaucratized, efficiency became the norm and therefore served as the definition of the value attributed to organizations. To offset this tendency to put efficiency before meaning, Weber pointed to extraordinary individuals or leaders who were capable of creating alignment between the actions individuals undertook in the organization and the meaning that they sought. Weber called this charismatic leadership, which for him came to be seen as a counter to the inevitable decline in meaning. Charismatic leaders possess a sort of magical, even mystical, presence that compels people to follow them. That gift is needed and should be used to reinfuse organizations with meaning, according to Weber.

To understand and add clarity to this idea of meaning in organizations, it is necessary to look to G. W. F. Hegel and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Let us begin by looking to social theory, in particular Hegel's idea that meaning derives from actions guided by the absolute value of ethics, aesthetics, or religion entirely for its own sake, apart from any measure of external success.[15] In addition, Rousseau's idea of social interconnectedness informs an understanding of meaning at work. His idea that the quest for meaning is obtained through social communion and solidarity through relationships with others fits well with an understanding of organizations as communities.[16] Finally, Émile Durkheim, writing just after World War II, added his perspective that organizational life was replacing the traditional meaning-making role of religion because the collective was now found at work and in industry, which was playing a central role in the 1940s and 1950s.[17] Building on these ideas and placing them into the current context of our present-day organizations, we conceive of meaning-making action as supportive of some ultimate end that the individual personally values, and affirming individuals' connection to the community of which they are a part. In sum, what we all long for in our work is activity that is of intrinsic, personal value and a community of connection.

However, leadership scholarship moved away from seeing meaning making as central to leadership in favor of a more functional approach, connecting leadership to economic or other measurable forms of performance. But this longing related to our work that we all have as humans has never gone away, nor has the pressing question of what is the *purpose* of leadership. It

seems that at such a time as this, when the world is open and inviting critical thinking concerning faith and leadership, there is great opportunity to move the discourse on the purpose of leadership back to its original consideration. Could it be that the contemporary integration of leadership and spirituality is actually a return to the origins of leadership, where the leader was thought to infuse purpose and meaning into the organizational experience? Indeed, transformational leadership is certainly one way in which the aspect of meaning is reintroduced into the leadership equation, insofar as this form of leadership activates beliefs and values, and raises the level of moral maturity for both leader and led.

In this book we try to get at this modern-day challenge of leadership purpose by looking to the apostle Paul's idea of community as a form of "organization" that creates and leverages a strong center of community as well as the centrality of faith-based values as critical to understanding individual valuation of particular actions. If we agree that one problem that confounds leadership scholarship is coupling leadership with economic performance, what then is the answer to this dilemma? Do we decouple this pairing? Obviously a leader, and for that matter followers, cannot infuse meaning over time unless the organization can survive, and since survival depends on a level of performance, we cannot expect to create organizations with the capacity to create meaning if we fully exclude performance from the discussion of leadership.

In an effort to hold together what we might consider the a priori of leadership—meaning making—with the functional reality of performance, we would do well to exercise restraint when attempting to establish a causal relationship between meaning making and performance. Though some research has supported this connection, still more is called for. To exercise restraint we need to develop compelling ways to assess meaning before we can draw definitive conclusions about the impact of meaning and economic performance. And it is important to note the causal relationship can flow in the other direction as well: individuals might perform at higher levels when they derive meaning from their work. In this regard, performance might be seen as an indicator of the ability to infuse meaning into an organization. And, likewise, we could hypothesize that individuals will derive little meaning from organizations that underperform. These are critical questions facing leadership researchers right now.

Areas for Further Investigation

Future areas of investigation regarding the intersection of leadership and faith /spirituality/religion that may help us return to the centrality of meaning and

purpose associated with leadership are described below. We take up several of these themes in this second edition.

1. *Ethics*. The influence spirituality has on ethical decision making and ethical leadership is significant.[18] For many this is the most direct way in which faith/spirituality/religion influences leadership—by establishing a high threshold for ethical conduct and basing standards on biblical principles. This area, of the integration of faith as it informs ethical decision making, is ripe with possibility and in need of further investigation.

2. *Ethical leadership*. Similar to yet different from the first area, here we take up what the responsibility of ethical leaders is. Articles by J. B. Cullen and B. Victor,[19] as well as Cullen, P. K. Praveen, and Victor,[20] discuss ethical work climates—which the authors describe as egoistic, benevolent, or principled—and address the role of the kinds of organizational cultures ethical leaders create. As might seem obvious, the benevolent culture holds great promise for investigating the intersection of leadership and spirituality. Such a climate might, for instance, increase the possibility for the spiritual development of members. Benevolent norms might encourage individuals to have a sincere interest in the well-being of everyone, regardless of stakeholder status or position, in an environment where community and finding meaning in work are common.

3. *The theory of spiritual leadership*. This theory has been developed within an intrinsic model that incorporates vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, based on theories of workplace spirituality and spiritual survival. The purpose of spiritual leadership is to tap into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival through calling and membership. A good instrument has been developed by L. W. Fry and others that links spiritual leadership with organizational commitment, and—guess what—it results in productivity and continuous improvement.[21] More work is called for in this critical area of spiritual leadership. Fry's model is the prevailing construct; building on this foundation is needed.[22]

4. *Absence of hubris*. Here some good work by Andre Delbecq has investigated how the absence of spiritual maturity and virtue leads to the fall of leaders.[23] The offset for hubris comes straight from the spiritual traditions, especially humility and love.[24] Could it be that egoistic ethical climates (as mentioned earlier) possibly do not foster the development of spirituality among members, by putting self first and seeking outcomes that support self-interest? The role faith and spirituality play in offsetting hubris is an intriguing area for further research.

5. *Spiritual values*. Robert Giacalone has explored the area of expansive values, as contrasted with materialistic values, that focus on achievement of money, power, and status. He argues those holding expansive values are more concerned

with creating a higher quality of life through achieving more humanistic goals for themselves, their communities, and future generations. They are concerned about issues of personal transcendence and spirituality. Giacalone believes the number of those holding expansive values is increasing around the globe. If Giacalone's predictions materialize, this will affect the way organizations operate if they hope to attract workers holding expansive values. Attracting such workers will require leaders skilled in and capable of leading with spiritual values.[25]

Also, the area of spiritual values is rich for exploring multireligious dimensions and commonalities, holding promise for the advance of interfaith dialogue and community.[26]

6. *Holistic approaches (whole-person awareness, or WPA)*. Such values as described above increase longing for and awareness of more holistic ways of being and doing. Also on the increase are researchers, particularly in the neurosciences, who are exploring whole-person awareness, which includes spiritual along with physical, emotional, intuitive, and intellectual awareness. This is very mainstream research.

Ian Mitroff and Elizabeth Denton point out that spirituality can be useful in helping people to bring their whole selves to work—to "deploy more of their full creativity, emotions, and intelligence."[27] In other words, a whole-person approach at work may even be a source of soul nourishment. WPA approaches and models provide a fruitful area for further investigation concerning the intersection of leadership and spirituality, exploring how the interaction between whole-person components enhances leadership and perhaps even supports the expression of spirituality in leaders.

7. *Resilience (perseverance, suffering)*. Margaret Wheatley argues that leaders need to look to the spiritual traditions for guidance for coping with turbulent times. She sees a clear movement of questions emanating from the domain of spirituality to leadership—for example, What is the purpose of life? Why is there suffering? and the like. "As our world grows more chaotic and unpredictable, we are forced to ask questions that have historically been answered by spiritual traditions."[28] Wheatley argues we should expect to see practices of enrichment, like spiritual practices that lead to growth, occurring more in organizations. This is a fascinating area of investigation.

8. *Organizational level of analysis*. There is still a good deal more work to be done looking at the organizational level of analysis of spirituality. Most work has been done at the individual level, whether focused on leader or follower. Margaret Benefiel[29] and Judith Neal[30] have done good work in this area; still, uncovering factors that lead to spiritual organizations in the marketplace and creating measurements to assess spiritual organizations are critical for greater understanding in this area. Benefiel makes clear that such research will require

new, holistic methods that consider the intangible, unmeasureable factors of faith. This is a burgeoning area of exploration.

One challenge in this area of research is dealing with the reality of most organizations—that is, by their very nature organizations are control oriented and instrumental. The field of Critical Workplace Spirituality examines the ways in which organizations can use spirituality to control and manipulate, this is done by asking what the outcome is of other-made meaning in organizations.[31] When the leader is the one making meaning, how is that different from the individual uncovering of meaning? Likewise, Critical Workplace Spirituality looks at the management of meaning versus meaningful work. There is no model that includes positive and negative effects of workplace spirituality at the organizational level of analysis.

The first and last question each of us will wrestle with concerning leadership is: *Leadership for what?* We have defined and validated many theories, approaches, and styles of leadership. We stand on the shoulders of those who did the first heavy lifting in this field, and we now have a growing great cloud of witnesses as the first generation yields the baton to the succeeding generations. It is our conviction that we owe a great debt to our world to use our scholarship to advance peace and justice. Leadership for what? May it be peace.

If you seek to take up the challenge of studying and investigating leadership, faith, and spirituality, it will turn back on you and examine you by asking gently: How is it that you are integrating your spirituality, your faith, into your leadership as a scholar and practitioner? This work is convicting, and it will not let you stand at a distance and examine it in purely analytical terms. Rather, it will invite you to the deeper place of the inner self, where spirit resides. For this work and this calling, we wish you strength and peace for the journey.