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A Contrast of the Pastoral Leadership and Secular Leadership Models

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ABSTRACT

This article will contrast the models of pastoral and secular leadership. A synopsis of the foundational or more common secular leadership models will be discussed first. Following will be a discussion on the pastoral leadership model with contrasts to the secular paradigm. Biblical support for the pastoral leadership model will be given to prove this standard of leadership as the ideal for pastor or church leader. The pastoral and secular leadership models converge in some aspects. However, this article will focus on the differences, and more specifically, on the distinction of pastoral leadership in particular highlighting servanthood, shepherding, character.

KEY WORDS: Secular Leadership, Pastoral Leadership, servanthood, shepherding, authority.

INTRODUCTION

It is often quipped that the church is not an organization but an organism. Observation of the local church, however, invokes reconsideration of such a statement in light of biblical models. An organization is defined as “a group of persons organized for some end or work.”² The church consists of a group of God-called people who are called together (organized) for a God-ordained purpose. Any group of people assembled as a body needs some degree of organization. The local church, therefore, can be considered both an organism and an organization. Jay Adams defines the church as “an organic entity that manifests itself in the world through a visible structure that, for its maintenance, requires planning, organization and rule.”³

While some churches borrow from the secular model in their organization, discernment must be exercised to avoid mimicking secular leadership models. The local church is distinctive in how it is organized and led. This primary point of distinction lies within the leaders themselves. The pastoral leaders in a local church derive their commission, competency, and model of leadership from

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² Robert B. Costello, ed., *Random House Collegiate Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1996), 953.

³ Jay Adams. *Shepherding God's Flock: Volume Three, Pastoral Leadership* (United States of America: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1975), 12.

Jesus Christ Himself rather than from the secular business philosophy. Jesus is the “head of the church”⁴ (Eph 5:23) and establishes the means and methods by which leaders serve under His headship. The pastoral model of leadership is not as an executive or manager in a business sense, but a shepherd or overseer in a biblical sense. This article will focus on the differences from that of secular leadership, and more specifically, on the distinction of pastoral leadership.

SECULAR LEADERSHIP MODELS

The secular leadership models are vast in theory and practice. There are too many to cover within the scope of this short article. Therefore, coverage will be given to the foundational leadership models from which emanate a broad range of leadership models with uniqueness in labels and implementations. Ernest White in his essay puts forth three common leadership models that have been born and shaped from the culture and society-at-large.⁵ First, there is the Organizational or Bureaucratic model or “Leadership by Organization.” Secondly, there is the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) model or “Leadership by Officer.” The third model is the Media Market Merchant model or “Leadership by Image.” Each of these models relates to the other and represents an emergence of one from the other. For example, the CEO model is a resultant model of the Organizational model, and the Media Market Merchant model was derived from the CEO model.

Organizational or Bureaucratic Model

The secular models of leadership are historically expressed through tiered organizations or bureaucracies. This structure is more often modeled in corporate and government organizations. However, such structure can be also seen in non-profit organizations and para-church organizations such as denominations. Roles and responsibilities within this organization are various and designated by titles of distinction according to the respective level of authority (e.g., president, vice-president, executives, directors, managers, supervisors). The different levels within the bureaucratic organization are often coveted by those seeking promotions or aspiring to positions of prominence.

White termed this leadership model as “Organization Man/Bureaucratic Leadership” that “features large administrative apparatus and an elaboration of detailed rules and regulations.”⁶ Historically, this model traces its roots back to the military following World War I and gained prominence during World War

⁴ Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture quotations are given in the New American Standard Bible (NASB) – Updated Edition.

⁵ Ernest White, “The Crisis in Christian Leadership.” *Review & Expositor* 83 no 4 (Fall 1986): 546-551.

⁶ White, 547.

II.⁷ The organization leadership model was eventually assimilated into many organizations throughout the United States and the world including church-related organizations.

The New Testament does not constitute a clear form of church structure and governance. Therefore, the biblical prescription for church structure or organization does not necessarily follow the hierarchical model seen in secular organizations. While some may point to Moses' leadership model in Exodus 18:25-26 as a form of organizational bureaucracy, such structure is not mandated for the church. Pragmatism may necessitate some delegation for more effective ministry as seen in Acts 6:1-7, but an overly-organized and heavily bureaucratic structure is often more problematic than pragmatic.

Chief Executive Officer Model

Another secular leadership style emerged from the organizational model that placed more emphasis in the chief leader or head of the organization. This leadership model is identified as the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Model or "leadership by office."⁸ The CEO model became prevalent as the administrative functions in the organizational model moved toward an emphasis on the leader or leaders in the organization. The leaders in the CEO model are often characterized as people seeking self-ambition, self-fulfillment, and self-aggrandizement. The leaders typically make decisions based on what is good for the company or their own good. The leaders can be further characterized as "self-protective and sees people in terms of their use for the larger organization and the CEO's record."⁹

This CEO model can be seen in some local churches and pastoral leaders. It can be especially prevalent in the mega-church culture as the church assumes more of a corporation ethos. White denotes this model as the "Wall Street Baptist" phenomenon:

The Wall Street Baptist Church has all the features and measures of a successful American corporation listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Each quarter this church corporation must show an increase in budget receipts, baptism records, and building reports. Quality of worship life, wholeness of persons, service to human needs, and witness to society must be kept secondary to the corporation concerns of the three B's of the bottom line: budget, baptisms, and buildings. Otherwise, the CEO will not be considered for a larger ecclesiastical corporation.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ White, 548-549.

⁹ White, 549.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Pastoral leaders who see their respective ministries *only* in terms of numerical increase can find themselves captured by pursuits indicative of this model. They can also fall into discouragement and envy when their results do not meet their own self-seeking goals or when measuring themselves against another church's or pastoral leader's accomplishments. While numerical increase in baptism, budgets, and buildings can be a result of God blessing upon faithfulness in ministry, quantifiable increases cannot be the sole measure of ministry success.

Media Marketing Merchant Model

The third leadership model identified is the Media Marketing Merchant Model or "Leadership by Image."¹¹ The emergence of this model can be attributed to the power and pervasiveness of media and marketing in current times. The technological advances of media and marketing have provided many innovative means and opportunities to reach the masses. Leadership in the secular and pastoral disciplines realize the possibilities in leveraging media and technology to accomplish their respective agendas.

The pitfall of the media and marketing strategy, however, is "manipulating the appearing of reality to the desiring of the producers."¹² The model focuses on the putting forth a positive image of the organization or leadership and managing the perceptions of the people being targeted. In further critique of this paradigm, White notes:

The Media Marketing Merchant makes the priority of leadership the management of the image. The science and art of dramaturgy has been perfected so that impressions of the leader are carefully constructed and managed. Competence and content of leadership are irrelevant in this approach. The perceptions and impressions of leadership hinge on successful public performances, not on sound judgment and decisions.¹³

While media and marketing are effective tools for communication and outreach, the church must be careful to avoid misuse and overuse. Presenting an image of church and leaders that is different than reality is nothing short of sinful manipulation which does not please nor honor the Lord.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

The secular leadership models aforementioned have influenced the modern church in various ways. Leaders and congregants who serve in these churches are exposed to these philosophies and embrace them as applicable to the local church and even normative for modern times. Michael Quicke notes that

¹¹ White, 549-551.

¹² White, 549.

¹³ White, 550.

Christian leadership “has forcefully entered center stage, thriving on the opportunities that secularism provides.”¹⁴

While some of the principles and techniques from these secular leadership styles can be used in church leadership, there remains divergent contrasts between the secular and pastoral leadership models. Therefore, the wise pastor must be discerning of the leadership models being adopted and applied in the local church. Adams warned that “uncritical adoption of business model for applications to the management of the church is unsound and dangerous.”¹⁵ Quicke speaks to the danger in the uncritical acceptance of secular business practices in the church:

So absorbed are they in their pursuit of success defined in those terms, many churches have hungrily gobbled up secular leadership principles and practice. Indeed Henry and Richard Blackaby protest, “The trend among many Christian leaders for an almost indiscriminate and uncritical acceptance of secular leadership theory without measuring it against the timeless precepts of Scripture.” God-talk and spirituality are inevitably sidelined by leadership pragmatism when secular models exercise a hypnotic stranglehold on the church. It is hardly surprising that when churches use business models, little room is left for preaching to give significant leadership.¹⁶

Thus, the concern about the leadership models in the local churches is a valid one. Leadership models are not neutral in the local church that is called to be “set apart” for the purposes of God.

Observation of the local church reveals some questionable and outright secular business models executed in the church. Adams corroborates by stating that “there has been too much easy adaptation of pagan principles and practices by evangelical churches in recent times; and the area of leadership and administration has not escaped this baneful trend.”¹⁷ Pastoral leadership carries clear distinction from the secular leadership models. The more prominent attributes of pastoral leadership have to do with the attitude of leadership, style, and objectives. The church of Jesus Christ is unique and is “set apart.” Church leadership and the models within which it is carried out should likewise be “set apart” and distinct from the world.

¹⁴ Michael J. Quicke, *360-degree leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 31.

¹⁵ Adams, 19.

¹⁶ Michael J. Quicke, 31.

¹⁷ Adams, 17.

Servant Leadership

The most fundamental difference between the pastoral and secular leadership model centers on the attitude of leadership. The biblical method for leadership is that of a servant leader. This notion of servant leadership may seem like a paradox when considering the common belief that leaders are typically served by subordinates rather than serving their subordinates. Those who hold the highest positions of authority in secular organizations typically require a high degree of service to be rendered unto them. But this model of leadership does not conform to the biblical standard taught and modeled by Jesus. Lawrence, in describing the distinctive of Christian leadership, states that it “is different from other kinds of leadership because no Christian leader can assume the position of being ‘number one,’ that is, the leader.”¹⁸ Jesus taught His disciples, those called and prepared to be leaders of the early church, the definition of godly leadership and its distinction from secular leadership. The Lord Jesus Christ states in Matthew 20:25-28:

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Jesus establishes the leadership philosophy for His followers to be that of a servant. Malphurs, in commenting on this text, states that “Christian leadership is servant leadership, and any definition of a Christian leader must include the concept of servanthood.”¹⁹ He states further that “a biblical image that is most common and dominant for leaders is that of a servant.”²⁰ Pastoral leadership according to the biblical paradigm consists of leaders who seek to render service rather than receive service.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme example for the servant leadership model. In the Matthew 20:28 mentioned above, Jesus asserts Himself as the standard when He declares, “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but *to serve*, and *to give* His life a ransom for many” (italics added). Jesus emphasizes that His mission did not consist of others catering to His every desire. Jesus rather came to serve the needs of others even to the point of giving His life as a ransom for rank sinners. Jesus modeled and established the leadership attitude

¹⁸ William D. Lawrence, “Distinctives of Christian Leadership.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (July-September, 1987): 317.

¹⁹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 32.

²⁰ Malphurs, 33.

for pastoral leaders. The godly and wise pastoral leader should seek to pattern his leadership on Jesus Christ as revealed in His Word.

Shepherding Leadership

Many pastoral leaders likely find it easier to relate to the CEO model due to the pervasiveness of the business and mega-church culture of the times. However, pastoral leaders in the church function more as shepherds than CEO's. The shepherding nature of pastoral leadership requires a biblical study to understand how it applies in modern leadership.

Reflecting back on Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus is clear in that the disciples' leadership does not function in the same way as that of leadership in society. Pastoral leaders do not lead in the context of human power and position but of humble service. Christian leadership is not about position and the power that goes with it, but about being an example, about leading from below rather than imposing from above.²¹

The pastoral leader is referred to in the New Testament as "elder" (Acts 20:17), "bishop" or "overseer" (1 Tim. 3:1), and pastor (Eph. 4:11). These terms for the pastoral office are used interchangeably. A careful study of the biblical texts that mention these terms will shed light on their respective function in the ministry of the church. Nonetheless, a common function for the pastoral leader is that of shepherding.

The shepherd metaphor for pastoral leadership is used throughout the New Testament to describe the attitude and function of leadership in the church. The apostle Peter in his epistle in 5:2 instructs the elders, or church leaders, to "shepherd the flock of God among you." The word "shepherd" in this verse carries the idea of dealing with the church (the flock of God) as a shepherd tends to sheep under his watch.²² Other shepherding responsibilities such as feeding, guiding, and protecting describe the pastor's ministry toward the sheep (God's people). Such pastoral responsibilities involve spiritual care of the church through the ministry of the Word such as preaching, teaching, and counseling.

As shepherds, pastoral leaders also hold governing responsibilities. Another word used in the New Testament to describe the pastoral leader is "bishop" or "overseer" (1 Timothy 3:1). While possessing governing authority in the church, the pastoral leaders are not unilaterally in charge of the sheep, but serve

²¹ Derek Tidball, *Ministry by the Book: New Testament Patterns for Pastoral Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 188-189.

²² The Greek word ποιμαίνω (*poimainō*) has the idea of to "watch out for other people," in the sense of "lead, guide, or rule." William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 842.

under the headship of the “Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4) to whom pastoral leaders are accountable. The Lord Jesus Christ is the “Chief Shepherd” and “that great Shepherd of the sheep” (Hebrews 13:20). The sheep belong to Christ and are entrusted to the care of the pastor, the undershepherd. This truth is a sobering reminder for the pastoral leader who will answer to the Lord Jesus Christ for how he carried out his shepherding ministry (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 5:4). This is a stark contrast to the secular business leader who can change jobs and companies with little or no concern for how he managed with his previous employer other than a favorable recommendation or the opportunity to return.

Relationships with people are an important aspect of Christian leadership. The shepherd metaphor illustrates this concept as Hemphill states that “the Christian leader cannot lead people unless he truly loves people.”²³ The pastoral model is to lead people rather than drive them (1 Pet. 5:3). Adams describes the shepherd leaders as participants in the activities into which they lead their sheep.²⁴ He further describes shepherding leadership as “participative, involved leadership” drawing upon the picture of the shepherd “down there on the plain, up there in the mountains, travelling the paths trod by the sheep themselves.”²⁵ Herein lays a stark contrast to the CEO model of leadership where the top leader (or leaders) can be disconnected or aloof from the people they lead.

Conflicts are inevitable in any organization. A key aspect of any leader, whether secular or pastoral, is dealing with conflicts. Conflicts can even occur in the pursuit of certain visions for the organization such as initiating a building program. The business (and some Christian) leaders who are deemed “successful” are often those seen as visionaries who lead an organization to some significant accomplishment or status that is impressive in the eyes of beholders. Sometimes the fulfillment of these visions comes at the cost of someone else’s well-being. Broken relationships and bruised spirits can fall casualty to the determined execution of a particular vision held dear by someone with higher authority. The shepherd leader should be considerate of the well-being of the people whom he leads regardless of the circumstances that led to the conflict. Oftentimes, the secular leadership model is more focused on the good of the organization rather than the good of the individual. Pastoral leadership that operates out of Christian love (1 Cor. 13:2) where the good of someone else is sought by all means (Gal. 6:10) is antithetical to such a philosophy.

²³ Ken Hemphill, *The Antioch Effect: Eight Characteristics of Highly Effective Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 89.

²⁴ Adams, 6.

²⁵ Ibid.

Authority

The pastor's authority does not come from himself or from power vested solely from his position or office. His authority comes from the Lord, the Ultimate Authority. The Lord Jesus Christ has "all authority...in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18b). The calling and the commissioning of the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 rest in the authority bestowed upon them by Jesus Christ. Likewise with men called to pastor, the authority bestowed upon them by Jesus Christ should never be considered their own. Jesus Christ "as the Chief Shepherd has appointed leaders and has given them *His* authority to lead and to manage the flock."²⁶ Lawrence states that, "It is when the leader learns to submit to Christ as the Leader, that is, when he learns to fly 'the white flag of victory,' that he becomes an authoritative Christian leader."²⁷

While the pastoral leader has authority to lead, he is not to be authoritarian in how he leads. Richard Land uses the word "authoritative" to describe the pastor-authority model of leadership in the local church.²⁸ In distinguishing between authoritarianism and authoritative, Land further writes: "Authoritarianism says, 'This is right because I say so.' Authority says, 'I say this because it is right.' A good leader has authority on his side but he is not authoritarian."²⁹ The pastoral leader recognizes his authority as belonging to Jesus Christ and nothing deserving or merited his (the pastor's) part (1 Cor. 15:10). Such reminder should affect humble service in the name of Jesus Christ rather than authoritarian leadership that is typical of the secular leadership model.

Secular and pastoral leadership both operate in the framework of authority. The vast distinction in the two leadership models does not rest on the issue of authority alone because authority is needed for any modicum of effective leadership. The difference between secular leadership and Christian leadership does not lie in the absence of authority but in the attitude that motivates authority, the sanctified nature of ambition and motivation.³⁰

The Scriptures are the authority of truth for the Christian believer and should be authoritative for the pastoral leader. Secular leadership assumes no such authority since it operates in an environment where faith is privatized and secondary to pluralistic ideals. The Christian leader must adhere to the authority of Scripture by which he shepherds the people of God. Adams states that "the

²⁶ Adams, 13.

²⁷ William D. Lawrence, "Distinctives of Christian Leadership," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (July-September, 1987): 318.

²⁸ Richard Land, "Pastoral Leadership: Authoritarian or Persuasive?" *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* Vol. 3 No. 1 (Spring 2005): 74.

²⁹ Joe S. Ellis, *The Church on Purpose* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1982), 131; quoted in Land, 74.

³⁰ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Press, 1967), 13; quoted in Land, 77.

pastor must recognize that the Scriptures are the basic Management guide for the church.”³¹ Without the authority of Scriptures, the pastoral leader foolishly tries to lead God’s people in his own wisdom which is powerless to lead people in the way of righteousness and truth. Biblical principles can be applied in the secular workplace for effectiveness, but secular principles devoid of biblical truth are not effective in pastoral leadership.

Qualifications for Leadership

Secular leaders are typically acclaimed for their credentials accomplished through educational achievement and pertinent experience. Leaders with impressive credentials are often those highly sought and esteemed in their respective fields. The qualifications for pastoral leadership, however, are not bound by such quantifiable criteria. Credentials can be helpful for assessing a man’s background and experience in consideration for a pastoral leadership role but should not be the sole criteria upon which he is hired. The qualifications for pastoral leadership consist primarily of character qualities. The Biblical qualifications for pastoral leadership are given in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and worth quoting:

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

The character qualities indicated in the above text reveal the importance of Christian character for those serving in pastoral leadership. Lawrence states that, “Christian leadership is unique in that it requires Christian character.”³² He states further that, “Other kinds of leadership speak ideally of the leader's character but none of them require Christian character.”³³ Such character must be a prerequisite for any pastoral candidate before he assumes the office of leadership. It is unbiblical to focus solely on other qualities such as credentials and experience for pastoral leadership. Prayer and watching must be in order to discern a man’s capacity to serve in the pastoral office.

³¹ Adams, 18-19.

³² Lawrence, 319.

³³ Ibid.

Secular leadership places less value on character and more on competence. A person's skill, accomplishments, recognition, and awards are often regarded as key factors in determining the facility for a particular leadership. However, assessing competence qualities alone can often overlook the most important aspects of a person and their ability to lead. The leader's authenticity is what is often overlooked in such a process of evaluating competency alone.

Authenticity is required of genuine and godly Christian leadership. Authentic Christian character is "congruence between attitude, word, and action, a congruence that speaks of integrity and serves as a magnet to draw others who listen and respond to the leader."³⁴ Lawrence further states the value of authenticity as "a commitment to Christ's lordship, recognizing Him as 'Number One,' enables the leader to carry out one of his major tasks, that of being a model of Christ-like maturity for those whom he leads."³⁵ A leader's authenticity cannot be inferred from evaluating competence alone by examining a person's resume and work history no matter how impressive the credentials. Hemphill states, "Competence is primarily an issue of skill and is easier than commitment to assess and develop."³⁶

The only quality of competency for the pastoral leader mentioned in the above Scripture text is "able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2). Shepherding the flock of God involves teaching believers the Word of God (Acts 20:28). The pastoral leader needs to be able to explain Christian doctrine and refute error. Adams states, "If shepherds wish to exercise biblical leadership with authority, they themselves *must know and teach the Scriptures faithfully in depth.*"³⁷

The concern for competence raises the issue of training and preparation for leadership. Secular and pastoral leadership alike require some degree of training for skills needed to serve effectively. Secular leadership, however, relies more on such education and training to build competency for optimal job performance. The pastoral leader can benefit from educational training and experience serving in leadership. However, he should realize that his training does not occur only in a formal sense but also in an experiential sense from his walk with God. First Timothy 3:6 states that the pastoral leader must not be "a novice"³⁸ where he is immature in the faith. God's preparation is not confined to a classroom or educational curriculum. God sovereignly prepares His servants experientially through their relationship with Him and growing in His grace.

³⁴ Lawrence, 320.

³⁵ Ibid..

³⁶ Hemphill, 96.

³⁷ Adams, 15.

³⁸ KJV uses the word "novice" to describe a new convert.

Christian leadership is a gift from the Holy Spirit.³⁹ The equipping for effective service can only occur through God's gracious work in the life of the pastoral leader. Since God graciously gives such gifts for the benefit of the church (1 Cor. 12:7), pastoral leaders must serve with the focus on God's purpose. Spiritual gifts for pastoral leaders are vital for effective ministry. Unless the basic capacity to lead is present as a gift from the Holy Spirit, one cannot be a Christian leader.⁴⁰

The aspiration for pastoral leadership is not necessarily wrong considering a man's motives are pure. In 1 Timothy 3:1, the text says "if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do." The words "aspires" and "desires" used together describes a man who "outwardly pursues it because he is driven by a strong internal desire."⁴¹ Thus, the desire and pursuit of pastoral leadership is not wrong since God is at work in the called man's heart "both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). The desire and pursuit of the pastoral leader is distinguished from that of the secular leader in that the pastoral leader seeks the will of God above his own desires for position and power.

Leadership Effectiveness

Strong leaders – whether pastoral or secular – are concerned about effectiveness in their carrying out their responsibilities. Effectiveness is sometimes labeled "success" in the modern-day vernacular when judging a leader's effectiveness. Standards for measuring effectiveness vary greatly between the secular and pastoral leadership models. The secular leadership model is established so that effectiveness can be evaluated in tangible means such as profitability or number of customers. However, the pastoral leadership model should not be evaluated by such standards as profitability and number of new members. While healthy finances and a growing membership can be the consequence of solid leadership, such results will not always be the case. The pastoral leader must be more concerned with leading in integrity and patterning his life and ministry based on the Word of God (Acts 20:20-21). White profoundly states that "the concern about Christian leadership is not simply its effectiveness; the chief concern must be the moral responsibility of leadership."⁴²

Concerning ambition or drive within the pastoral leader, motive is once again a factor. A strong leader needs ambition to lead people with energy and vigor. Malphurs states that "while leaders' gifts provide them with special abilities for

³⁹ Lawrence, 320.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ John MacArthur, ed. *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville:Thomas Nelson, 2006), 1833.

⁴² White, 552.

their ministry, their passion supplies long-term direction and motivation for those gifts.”⁴³

Lethargic leadership is ineffective in leading people who themselves need to see energy in their leaders to follow them faithfully. Ambition keeps the leader passionate in pursuing and realizing his vision. The key is the right ambition as Lawrence states:

Ambition is essential in a leader for it provides the drive and the desire necessary to carry the burdens and responsibilities of leadership; ambition is the fuel of leadership. There is no problem with ambition in itself; the problem with ambition lies in its aim, not in its strength and its presence, as Mark 10:35-45 makes clear.⁴⁴

Inordinate ambition is a temptation for both secular and pastoral leadership. Christian leadership, however, is distinctive in that it does not pursue success with a “whatever-it-takes” or a “by-any-means-necessary” attitude. The Christian leader must beware of selfish or egotistical ambition as warned against and reproved in Philippians 2:3. Christian ambition must be understood as the redirection of aim, not the denial of desire.⁴⁵

A pertinent goal of pastoral leadership is transformation of the people who are being lead. The leadership model in which he serves must be a catalyst for effecting Christ-like change in the people. Lawrence states concerning the goal of transformation: “The purpose of each Christian leader should be to guide others in following Christ. His aim should be to focus on Him and to show others how to do this.”⁴⁶ Secular leadership is not concerned with such inward change in their subordinates.

The pastoral leader should realize that they will not see in this lifetime all the change they desire from their service. Since believers are being prepared for eternity, the pastoral leader is God’s instrument in soul care of the flock until they are ultimately in the care of the Chief Shepherd in glory (John 21:15-17). Therefore, the pastoral leader should be encouraged about the eternal difference they are making in the lives of God’s people. No amount of pay, perks, or prominence can compare with such a high calling. Adams states:

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a human organization; it was not created by men, nor was it intended to serve purely human needs. Therefore, many of its *objectives* will not be realized in time but only in eternity. Moreover,

⁴³ Malphurs, 78.

⁴⁴ Lawrence, 323.

⁴⁵ Lawrence, 324.

⁴⁶ Lawrence, 319.

objectives of both sorts (eternal, temporal) are not always subject to quantifiable measurement.⁴⁷

Competition is an issue that the pastoral leader must be watchful and diligent to avoid. The secular leadership model is organized to be competitive and “outdo” the competitors who threaten their potential or prominence. Such competition can lead to aggressive tactics such as criticism of the competitor and even questionable practices to get any advantage. The pastoral leader must understand that other churches (ones centered on biblical truth) do not pose any competitive threat even if they are in close proximity in meeting locations. Pastoral leaders have such a distinction in that they share in the successes of other leaders since all ministry is done to the glory of God. Jesus reprimanded His disciples who were concerned about competition by telling them that “he who is not against you is for you” (Luke 9:50).

The right concern about the effectiveness of pastoral leadership should not only be its ends but its means. Pastoral leadership can be deemed a “success” if it is carried on according the Scriptural precepts regardless of tangible and visible results. White states, “The concern about Christian leadership is not simply its effectiveness; the chief concern must be the moral responsibility of leadership. ‘Is leadership ethically and morally responsible?’ is a more appropriate question for the Christian than “Is it powerful?”⁴⁸

Pastoral leaders recognize that their calling is by the sovereign grace of God and realize they are privileged to be God’s servant (1 Tim. 1:11-14). While pastoral leaders serve in a role that can be very demanding with little temporal reward, the pastor’s sense of call and commitment to Christ supersedes the difficulties and dismal rewards. The mature pastoral leader knows his strength and sufficiency come from the Lord and not of his own (2 Cor. 3:5; 12:9). The pastoral leader reaps the rewards of joy in being used by God and seeing Him work in the lives of people, including his own. Tidball states that “as to reward, true Christian leadership is not undertaken for money but for the sheer joy of service.”⁴⁹ Such a sense of calling is significantly different from the typical secular leader who often works for the rewards and prestige of his position.

CONCLUSION

Secular thinking has influenced Christian leadership in subtle ways. Quicke summarizes the unhealthy effect of this influence in stating, “The tendency for secular leadership to focus exclusively on positives, playing to strength and

⁴⁷ Adams, 17.

⁴⁸ White, 552.

⁴⁹ Tidball, 188.

neglecting negatives, flies straight in the face of the Christian need for confession and dependence on God's grace."⁵⁰

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Corinthians believers to "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). This teaches believers to follow their pastoral leaders as they follow Christ. The goals of the pastoral leader should be commensurate with the purposes of Jesus Christ. Lawrence in quoting a private conversation with Howard Hendricks states that "a Christian leader will have goals in keeping with his Leader's goals, and motives that are in keeping with his Leader's motives."⁵¹ By following pastoral leaders who follow Christ, Christians follow Christ. The ultimate in pastoral leadership is following the leadership and guidance of Christ through His chosen servants. The pastoral leadership model is unique in that its means and ends for leadership is Jesus Christ Himself. The genuine aim is the shepherding of the flock of God in the way of Jesus Christ for His glory alone.

The principles of pastoral leadership should be biblical and its purpose should be the glory of God. David Steele gives an exhortation that "to best discover the function of a New Testament shepherd one must look to our model par excellence, the Great Shepherd of the sheep."⁵² Secular and pastoral leadership, while overlapping in some methods, are vastly different in its principles and purpose. It behooves the Christian leader to be aware of these distinctions to know the right way to embrace and the wrong way to evade concerning the leadership of God's people. No man-made methodology can outdo what God has ordained. The faithful Christian leader commits his life and leadership to God who is faithful (1 Thess. 5:24).

⁵⁰ Quicke, 31.

⁵¹ Lawrence, 319.

⁵² David A. Steele, *Images of Leadership and Authority for the Church: Biblical Principles and Secular Models* (Landham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 25.

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