**Leadership**

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are from the King James Version.

**Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Gloria Pressley Garcia. Since her far too soon departure to be with the Lord, my mother has inspired all my work.



This work is further dedicated to the memory of Jane Kristen Marczewski  (December 29, 1990 – February 19, 2022), better known as Nightbirde. A 2013 graduate of Liberty University. She won a Golden Buzzer from the TV Show American Got Talent with her original song, “It OK.”

Yes, Nightbirde, It’s OK



It's okay, it's okay, it's okay, it's okay  
If you're lost  
We're all a little lost, and it's alright

Please give to the [Nightbirde Foundation](https://www.nightbirdefoundation.org/)

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# **Introduction**

Chaplains are leaders. They are present when others are experiencing their worst times and are expected to lead others to safe places. Any direct effort does not realize this leadership but rather is a calling from God. Hence, God needs to determine who is prepared or who is not. This is the calling of spiritual leadership to which God makes the appointment.

However, there are dynamics to this call that can and should be studied. Through study, one can become what God expects. We cannot make the appointment, but we can examine its elements. This is the goal of this paper. We need to understand the dynamics of spiritual leadership.

Chaplains are agents of spiritual care. This requires forming a Pastoral Theology (the what) of the call. Then, we understand the dynamics of spiritual leadership (the how). Leadership is the vehicle that moves the call. It is a complex reality of calling and moving the call, all in the service of God for the benefit of the people of God.   
 After all, these principles define the chaplain’s professional identity, which is also the purpose of this paper. Chaplains serve outside the sanctity and security of the church building. They exist within the secular community, infusing spiritual care with secular care. We are expected to know how this marriage of care can best work to be successful. This is a problematic endeavor yet a necessary one.

This paper seeks to provide awareness and guidance on the how of our roles. To the extent that we master this, our service becomes more effective. God has appointed us to this most difficult of caring roles. Let us move forward to this high calling to which we are called, validating the supremacy of our Lord and Savior.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing.

Philippians 3:13- 16, KJV

# **What is Leadership?**

Leadership means different things in different contexts. In this paper, we look at leadership in a spiritual context**.** We believe there is a difference between secular leadership and spiritual leadership. As we serve in a spiritual calling, it is important to understand how we exercise leadership.

While leadership is often defined in secular terms like money, property, and people, spiritual leadership has more essential dynamics. These elements are not critical in spiritual leadership, nor should spiritual leadership be defined in secular terms. We need to remain steadfast in the principles of spiritual leadership.

In the text Leadership Taking Charge, the author presents 850 ways to define secular leadership.[[1]](#footnote-1) Hence, secular leadership does not have a clear definition. This lack of definition is important. How will one know when it exists if one cannot define it?

We believe that any definition of leadership that does not begin with God is not spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership is not about an entity or an organization but rather an acknowledgment that all effective leadership starts with the ability to lead God’s way.

Former President Harry Truman defined leadership as getting others to do what they do not want and like.[[2]](#footnote-2) This emphasizes leadership on the human ability to persuade and motivate. While this is true, it is not spiritual leadership. Spiritual leaders have motives and agendas; however, both must be directed by the Holy Spirit.

John Gardner emphasizes persuasion as the means leaders use to move people toward their objectives.[[3]](#footnote-3) However, this secular definition fails to include God's presence in leaders' actions. Spiritual leadership is not about goals but the principles God has set forth for His kingdom.

George Barna writes that leadership begins with call, character, and competencies, which he calls his three Cs.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, leadership is only partially a measure of a leader’s qualities. The greatest quality in leadership is following the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Peter Drucker writes that leadership is not a matter of popularity but instead of results. This is perhaps closer to God's reality. If one looks at Scripture, it is evident that God repeatedly used persons of lesser regard and questionable character to accomplish great things (1 Cor. 1: 26-28, The Holy Bible, King James Version).

So, how do we define leadership? We assert that leadership is the ability to move people to God’s agenda. Blackaby argues that this definition has several important distinctions, including;

1. A Spiritual leader moves people from where they are to where God wants them to be.
2. Spiritual leaders depend on the Holy Spirit
3. Spiritual leaders are accountable to God.
4. Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God’s people.
5. Spiritual leaders work from God’s agenda.[[5]](#footnote-5)

We agree with the assertions of Blackaby.

# **How Does God Develop Leaders?**

The organization or entity is directly correlated to the leader. Leadership development is critical and only comes through personal development. The question becomes, what are the paths to successful personal development? Individual growth leads to personal development.

Life experiences are a primary means of personal growth. First, it is important to remember that most great leaders began as ordinary people. Many of these leaders were not physically or mentally impressive, yet their lives transformed them from ordinary to extraordinary. Former President John F. Kennedy writes about that transformation that takes one from meager beginnings to greatness in his text Profiles in Courage.[[6]](#footnote-6) Winston Churchill, former Chancellor of the United Kingdom, wrote, "Success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm." [[7]](#footnote-7) The great Napolean Hill wrote, "Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle." [[8]](#footnote-8)

Childhood experiences often prepare one for later greatness. Love and care in the home are an asset that cannot be undervalued. The presence and knowledge of God in one’s life through childhood is a vehicle for greatness. Having solid academic preparation gives one an appreciation for wisdom and knowledge. All of these are excellent vehicles for personal growth.

As surprising as it may seem, failure is also an excellent vehicle for personal growth. It is not the failure but the strength, determination, and tenacity that drive one to exemplary personal growth. Thomas Edison wrote, "Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration." "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work. " And if we did all the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves." [[9]](#footnote-9)

Yes, our life experiences are excellent sources of personal development. However, the most significant source is the Holy Spirit, which resides within us. Oswald Sanders writes, “There is no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader.”[[10]](#footnote-10) The Holy Spirit alone leads one to spiritual maturity. The Lord answers the question of spiritual leadership in Zechariah 4:6, where it is written, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, “Not **by** might, nor **by** power, but **by** my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Richard Clinton writes about the path to spiritual leadership.[[11]](#footnote-11). He offers six stages of development;

Phase 1 Sovereign Foundations – God's presence during the formative years.

Phase 2 Inner Life Growth – the time when people develop their character and spiritual life

Phase 3 Three Ministry Maturing – early attempts at spiritual leadership

Phase 4 Life Maturing – where leaders focus on the strengths and identify areas where they can be most effective

Phase 5 Convergence – where their ministry life and life experiences converge into a specific role

Phase 6 Afterglow or Celebration – few people reach this stage. Leadership after a long period.

God appoints His leaders. God bases His appointments on character. The greater the character, the greater the assignment. Character building is a long, slow process that cannot be rushed. It occurs through the everyday experience of life. The best character building comes from redemption, as God forgives our human mistakes.

# **The Leader’s Character**

The quest for leaders is to get others to follow them. Leaders without followers are not leaders. Leadership today is defined as influence. Influence is not a new term. Dale Carnegie asserted the importance of influence in the early twentieth century.[[12]](#footnote-12) Despite the writing of Carnegie's earned influence as a leadership style, it was not widely practiced.

Instead, the more illegitimate basis for leadership was widely practiced. One such basis was position. Decades ago, position captured both influence and respect. However, the position was inherently flawed. For one, it was subject to abuse. Leadership based on position leads to ill-equipped and incompetent leaders. Position did not equate to character, and this absence of character led to the abandonment of position as a leadership style.

Character is a spiritual term. It means being a caring leader with integrity, honesty, and effectiveness. As a leadership base, the position did not meet these requirements, so it was replaced by knowledge. Knowledge meant those with greater access to knowledge were the leaders. This, too, was based on oppression. Knowledge was parsed as a currency to maintain leadership. However, technology and greater access to higher education institutions soon disenfranchised knowledge as a power source.

Finally, Power was a leadership style. It was based on whoever had greater power being the leader. The problem became that people were not coerced into following a leader based on power. Strong-armed leadership led to resentment and efforts to unseat totalitarian leaders.

The final basis for leadership was personality. While personality is not necessarily illegitimate, it is a weak basis of power if that is all one has to offer. To be maintained, personality needs to be supported by legitimate sources of leadership.

So, if all the leadership bases above are illegitimate, the question becomes what is a legitimate basis for leadership. There are a few significant ones that are consistent with character. Character is defined as how someone thinks and feels, most notably with desirable and valued qualities. McChrystal writes that character is not a trait inherited at birth, nor does it automatically come from education, position, or experience. Character, instead, comes down to a succession of choices, most mundane, several momentous, that reveal the profound truth of our capacity for virtue.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The first basis for leadership is God's authentication. God affirms the leader before the people of God. God affirms all of the Scriptural leaders. The apostle Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament, was affirmed by God on the Damascus Road. When God exalts one of His leaders, the world acknowledges this.

Leaders who take the time to see if God affirms their leadership are true leaders. For instance, Billy Graham reached an impasse in his ministry and prayed for God to lead him. This was when Billy Graham became an internationally known preacher.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Moreover, there should be ample evidence that God is affirming the leadership. Perhaps the greatest affirmation of God’s authentication is that lives are being changed.[[15]](#footnote-15) When lives are changed, God is undoubtedly affirming that ministry.

It is important to remember that people do not choose to be spiritual leaders. Leadership comes from a relationship with God, and this relationship is based on complete submission to God. This is when God affirms this ministry.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Leadership is also based on integrity. Integrity promotes trust, which is enhanced when leaders act honestly. In Proverbs 10:9, we read, "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known." Upright is a euphemism for integrity.[[17]](#footnote-17) Integrity is one of the most important qualities in leadership

Success in ministry is another sign that God has authenticated the ministry. Success is a blessing from God. Leaders who have long-term success walk with God in their ministry.

Another key leadership quality is preparation, either through study or through the use of resources. Good preparation inspires trust. An adage is: Those who fail to plan, plan to fail. In ministry, this is especially true. 2 Timothy 2:15 provides, Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

# **Leadership Vision**

A leader must have a vision. Scripture says, Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29-18a). Vision keeps the leader grounded and moves the people toward a desirable end. The grander the vision, the grander the organization. However, the vision must not be reckless or spurious. The vision must be achievable and one that counts the costs before undertaking. Scripture also says, For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and **count**eth **the** cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it (Luke 14:28)? A sound vision assesses the available resources and the ability of the people to accomplish the goal.

This requires the leader to know the people's skills and will. A vision that is beyond their reach will only frustrate them. This frustration may lead to lethargic people and, eventually, the entity's death. Therefore, the leader must have insight and wisdom.

Another important consideration is the leader's motivation in determining a vision. If the vision is based on vanity or self-interest, then its dishonesty may make it more difficult. The vision may be more challenging for people to follow, and the result may not be in their best interest. The consideration must be how we serve the will of the people[[18]](#footnote-18).

The vision is to honor God and serve His people. God knows what He desires for His people. Therefore, the best vision comes from God. It is referred to as God's revelation.[[19]](#footnote-19) In Exodus 3:3-10, God revealed to Moses to lead Moses out of bondage. This is how God works. God knows what is best for His people and assigns the revelation to those He believes can accomplish it.

This, of course, means the leader must have a relationship with God. Moses was such a man.[[20]](#footnote-20) It also required the people of God to trust and follow Moses. In Exodus 3:13-14, the Scripture addresses how Moses would present his vision (revelation) to the people of God. Finally, in verse 18, God lets Moses know He will be with Moses and the people. This is the Scriptural presentation of how God's revelation occurs.

The same pattern was followed with Abraham. Jonah and Jesus. God makes His will known to Godly men, and these men, in turn, offer a vision to the people to follow.

In contemporary times, the vision is presented to the people through Scripture exhortation and the proclamation of God's message through sermons. Hence, the leader must be a voice that the people desire to hear. Scripture says in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

**Leadership Decision Making**

## Influences on Leadership

The Holy Spirit is the moving force in God’s revelations. Spiritual leadership does not balance the pros and cons of a given decision. On the contrary, leadership is based upon the direction of the Holy Spirit., The leader receives direction from the Holy Spirit through prayer.

The Holy Spirit speaks to humanity through prayer.[[21]](#footnote-21) This is a convicting prayer which is very deep. Prayer is the private and deepest communication with God. This sort of prayer is premised upon a good prayer life. It is a tragic mistake that too many leaders neglect a good prayer life. This result is almost always a fatal error.

The Holy Spirit convicts followers as well. In that case, the follower comes to the leaders to interpret the direction. Pharoah called on Joseph to interpret his direction from a dream.

The apostle Paul was sent to Ananias to interpret the voice from the Damascus Road (Acts 9: 5-10).

Yes, Prayer is one of the most powerful resources a leader has. However, again, this is only true when the leader has a good prayer life. Moreover, this reciprocal relationship between a leader and follower should lead the leader to select the best follower as an advisor. A good leader should always have a trusted advisor.

When God chose Moses to go to Pharoah to free the people, God provided Aaron as a trusted advisor (Ex 4:14). The apostle Paul had Timothy (1 Tim 1:2). God will give the leader a vision through the Holy Spirit. Moreover, God will always provide what is needed to fulfill the revelation, whether that required would be a faithful and trusted advisor. The leader must also be careful to discern the motives of those who act as advisors. In Job, there were several trusted friends who brought bad advice. Job 2:11-13). Discernment is also a gift that leaders must cherish.

Several influences affect a leader’s vision. However, the strongest is prayer. A good prayer life has great value. Moreover, leaders must encourage followers to have a good prayer life. This serves the cause of good spiritual leadership.

Strategic Leadership

The final type of leadership we examine is strategic leadership.[[22]](#footnote-22) This is actually long-term decision-making. It demands an ability to solve problems and make long-term decisions. Strategic leadership is facilitated by a clear understanding of the people and how that relates to long-term goals. It is quite different from day-to-day leadership (tactical leadership) in that much of strategic leadership is forecasting, while tactical leadership addresses daily problems and issues.

Key traits of strategic leaders are

1. Self Confidence
2. God Listening Skills
3. Strong communication skills
4. Open Mindedness.

God is an excellent example of a strategic leader. One of God’s character traits is immutability, which is understood as ever remaining the same. When coupled with God's other trait of omniscience, it is clear that God is a strategic leader.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The vision inherent to Scripture goes from the beginning of the world with Adam and Eve through the end of the world with the provisions of Revelation. It includes a path of salvation to avoid eternal damnation and the Book of Life, which will completely recite our lives. God has created an error-free long-term plan for His creation, Mankind. God is a strategic leader.

# **Conclusion**

Chaplains need good leadership to remain grounded on task. We go where others will not go and work with those others will not work with. We work outside the sanctity of the four walls of the church. In some cases, this is good. In other instances, getting lost in what one is doing is easy. The purpose of leadership is to keep one grounded in the ministry and working towards an acceptable end.

In this paper, we discuss what good spiritual leadership is. We started with an easy definition of leadership. Leadership is moving a group of people to a designated location. Of course, good spiritual leadership is based on the revelation of God and guided by the direction of the Holy Spirit. This requires a knowledge of what God wants one to do. That only comes through a good relationship with God. In addition, one must be submitted to the Holy Spirit. When the leader has both, leading a group of people becomes possible.

Leadership is not just a simple move. It also encompasses setting a direction for immediate and future programming, which is referred to as strategic leadership. We discussed the qualities of strategic leaders and how strategic leadership functions. Both immediate (tactical) and strategic leadership should flow from one another, enabling a smooth transition from one to another.

So, leadership is not only qualitative but also quantitative. This means good leadership begins with the leader's personality, but that personality alone is insufficient. As we have seen, leaders must also have a solid vision that the people can accept. A good vision includes the how and the why. Then, the leader must relate the vision to the people in a way that fosters acceptance. Leadership is a complex phenomenon. It cannot be solely taught. The leader must have the qualitative ability to know and relate to his people. Leadership is an art as much as a skill.[[24]](#footnote-24) Leaders must be able to use art to develop skills. This paper has attempted to present a balance between the two.

This paper has been a pleasure to write. It has allowed one to assess the leaders one has in one's life. Does one have good leadership? This can be determined by matching the conclusions of this paper to whom you call a leader. I pray you all have good leadership. However, if not, now you know what a good spiritual leader is all about.

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