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ABSTRACT

A substantial body of classical research on leadership has consistently concluded that great leaders share similar traits, exhibiting a production (task) orientation, or a people (relationship) orientation in their leadership profiles. These findings offer surprising and valuable parallels to the three primary perspectives on the biblical concept of *imago dei* (image of God) - substantive (characteristic or trait), functional (production), and relational. We explain the ways in which these discovered models of leadership behavior match significantly with the specific ways in which humans reflect the image of God. We then explore the practical implications for leadership improvement as Christians lead in their capacity as the image bearer of God.

INTRODUCTION

As followers of Christ, we must seek to understand what the revelation of Scripture teaches us about the marketplace work (and leadership) efforts to which we are called in our walk with Christ. In addition, we must study, appreciate, and share the ways in which our observations of the human experience – general revelation – verify (or at least support) the claims of Scripture – special revelation. Through the discussion below, we give a brief examination of the illuminating connection between decades of secular leadership research and the specific revelation regarding God's creation of humans in His own image, or the *imago dei*. The implications these findings have on our leadership efforts as followers of Christ are then discussed.

Today's over-abundance of books on leadership underscores the fact that leadership is indeed critical to human flourishing. Most great human endeavors arise from leadership efforts,, stories and models about substitutes for leadership notwithstanding.[1] Even in the realm of Christian discourse, leadership models abound.[2] There has developed over time a great body of work clarifying the ways in which leadership provides great value to organizations and societies, but the evolution of scholarly research and observation over the past century has resulted in three major models of leadership behavior. The thesis of this essay is to demonstrate that fundamental leadership models match up wonderfully with the three major perspectives of the *imago dei* (i.e., humans created in the image of God.) We should be greatly intrigued by the fact that a century of (mostly secular) leadership research reveals that human leadership behavior matches what we would expect from humans created in the image of God.

The great body of classical leadership observation and research revealed three general patterns of leadership profiles:

1. Trait Models (originally, the "Great Man Theory")
2. Task/Production Orientations
3. People/Relationship Orientations

A vast body of theological interpretation on the subject of the *imago dei* can also be summarized into three prominent (non-competing) ways that humans reflect the image of the God:

1. Substantive (Characteristics) View
2. Functional View
3. Relational View

After a brief survey of the literature on these themes, we will examine how leadership behavior lines up with what we would expect of human leaders created in God's image. Next, we consider what this overlap means for those of us who lead organizations, businesses, and people – especially as we do so with the intention of reflecting and glorifying God ever more through our leadership opportunities.

THE EVOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP PROFILES

For the purposes of this paper, we observe that much of the classical and foundational research on the subject has arisen from three major profiles of leaders and how they behave in organizational settings – Trait profiles, Task/Productivity orientations, and People/Relationship orientations. Leadership courses, textbooks, studies, etc., typically focus on these models as the beginnings of understanding leadership. While more modern research establishes what a leader might do and how leaders might behave – e.g., Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership[3] – the seminal classic studies are understood as the foundation from which these additional models are built.

TRAIT MODELS OF LEADERSHIP

Simply put, we all have the sense that some people are born to be natural leaders, while others are less so. That ability, or tendency or capacity, is manifest both in the growth of these special individuals into leadership roles, and in the traits (characteristics) that make them more likely to be seen/chosen as leaders. This model stems from the work of many early organizational (and sociological) researchers, who studied various world-class leaders from different times, places, and arenas to identify the traits that made them stand out and aided their leadership efforts. Trait models remain popular in modern times,[4] but the classic work belongs to scholars such as Ralph M. Stogdill and Robert W. Mann.[5] Along with the work of several other researchers, Stogdill and Mann determined that certain traits were common among successful leaders. Northouse aggregates these findings into the following "Major Leadership Traits":[6]

- Intelligence
- Self-confidence
- Determination
- Integrity
- Sociability

As we will see below, this small set of valuable characteristics shared by successful leaders are congruent with those we expect to see in God's image bearers.

TASK/PRODUCTIVITY AND PEOPLE/ RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATIONS

A second major finding of foundational leadership research is that leaders exhibit a dichotomous style and orientation: Task/Productivity and People/Relationship. Most textbooks and comprehensive guidebooks on the subject of leadership prominently present the development of leadership knowledge in terms of leadership styles and the contextual situations in which leaders find themselves. This research has resulted in several powerful models of leadership, including:

- Ohio State studies
- University of Michigan studies
- Blake-Mouton model
- Fiedler's Contingency model

Ralph Stogdill emerged as a major contributor of understanding about leadership, heading the decades-long project eventually known as the Ohio State studies.[7] The findings of this body of work is typically summarized as demonstrating that leaders exhibit one of two different leadership styles, or orientations: "initiating structure" and "consideration." Leaders who are oriented toward initiating structure are typically focused on creating the conditions under which the task at hand can best be accomplished. Goal achievement is paramount, and these leaders naturally are persistent in leading others to higher levels of productivity. Leaders who are oriented towards consideration are typically focused on relational behaviors, especially in team-building, esprit de corps, and meeting the needs of followers. Such leaders are not necessarily less successful or productive; they simply focus on a broader conceptualization of what it means to be a successful leader.

At the University of Michigan, another research team found that leaders of small groups tended to exhibit two distinct types of leadership behaviors – "employee orientation" and "production orientation."[8] As one might expect, leaders exhibiting an employee orientation tend to prefer the development of meaningful relationships with subordinates as a means of inspiring, motivating, and creating teams united through these personal relations, as well as achieving the organization's goals. Production orientation pertains more to those leaders who are primarily focused on achieving organizational goals, and who utilize their teams as the means for achieving these goals, with less concern about meeting the

TABLE 1
LEADERSHIP STUDIES IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Study	Production/Task	People/Relationships
Ohio State	Initiating Structure	Consideration
Michigan	Production Orientation	Employee Orientation
Blake-Mouton	Concern for Production	Concern for People
Fiedler's Contingency	Task Motivated	Relationship Motivated

personal needs of team members.[9]

Blake and Mouton's behavioral model of leadership is anchored by two alternate factors.[10] These factors, as we might expect, are "concern for production" and "concern for people." Finally, Fred Fiedler's well-known Contingency Model of Leadership aimed at demonstrating that leaders have an ingrained sense of leadership style that renders them fit or unfit for leadership roles depending on the situational factors in which the leadership activity takes place. It also identified a leader as either "relationship-motivated" or "task-motivated."[11] Table 1 provides a summary of these styles and orientations.

The collected body of research demonstrates that both leadership orientations are necessary for success and are exhibited by various organizational leaders. Leaders think of followers, subordinates, and employees primarily as either the means or the ends in organizational efforts. We are all, of course, both means and ends, but each of us has a primary focus when engaging in leadership activities. It is important to note that this vast body of research is not in complete agreement about whether leaders are capable of both orientations,[12] or just one primary orientation,[13] and there are differing results in terms whether leaders can change their orientation through learning or over time.[14]

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON THE *IMAGO DEI*

Like most important theological themes, any study of what it means to be created in the image of God could be infinitely deep. The primary reference is recorded in Genesis 1: 26-27 (NIV):

> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The *imago dei* (image of God) is a critical, central concept of biblical theology. Scripture tells us that humans are created by God in a special way – they alone are bearers of His image; they alone are like Him. But what does that mean? How are they like Him? What exactly is His image? What elements of His image do humans reflect? It is beyond the scope of this paper to engage in extensive exegesis or theological discussions. Rather, we offer a summary rendering of the most common way of understanding the *imago dei*, which incorporates three perspectives:[15]

RELATIONAL VIEW

Man in the image of God is understood to mean that the special relational capabilities that humans possess are reflective of the nature of our Creator. In this relational view, God imparted at the time of creation only to those who bear His image the unique ability to relate to Him in presence (pre-fall), thought, prayer, and communion. The relational view of the *imago dei* thus helps us to understand that God created us to be relational creatures, just as He is relational. While all aspects of the human relationship is marred by the fall into sinful nature, humans – including leaders – pursue relationships with other people, their environment, and (often) God.

FUNCTIONAL VIEW

A second perspective holds that God's image is reflected in the things that man does, especially insofar as man lives and acts according to the creation (divine, cultural) mandate (i.e., rule over other creatures and exercise dominion over the earth). Man reflects God's image to the extent that he obeys the very commands of God and exercises dominion over the rest of creation. God's created image bearers are invited to be co-creators with Him in the continued unfolding of the created order, including the ongoing ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5: 16-21). Those of us who are called to marketplace ministries are especially attuned to this perspective as it gives meaning and purpose to our God-glorifying work. It is in this perspective that we understand humans as engaging in the work of adding and creating value – building their world around them through work, production, and creativity.

SUBSTANTIVE VIEW

This third perspective of the *imago dei* is particularly helpful in analyzing human nature. From this perspective, we consider the various attributes or characteristics of God the Creator that are reflected in the human creature. While few would consider the physical make-up of humans to reflect God's own, humans are more likely to reflect the psycholog-

ical and spiritual image of their creator. Among these divinely-imparted attributes are:

- **Morality, fairness or justice** – e.g. Acts 10: 34; Zech. 7: 10; Psalm 89: 14; Is. 61: 8; Micah 6: 8
- **Creativity and innovativeness** – e.g. Gen. 1; Gen. 11: 1-9; Ex. 35: 35; Ex. 31: 1-6
- **Reason, intelligence and rationality** – e.g. Romans 11:33; Psalms 147:5; Job 32: 10-12; Is. 1: 18; Eccl. 2: 3-9
- **Efficiency and orde**r – e.g. Gen. 1; 1 Peter 5: 1-6; Hebrews 7; 1 Timothy 3: 1-13; Titus 2: 1-10; Colossians 3; 2 Timothy 4: 1-5; Acts 1: 21-26
- **Love** – e.g. 1 John 4: 16; Matt. 22: 37-39; John 3: 16

These, of course, represent just a sampling of the various attributes of God that are reflected in His image bearers, but they may suffice to make the point that characteristics and traits are key to understanding how humans – and humans in their leadership roles – may reflect God's image.

To summarize, humans reflect God's image in three specific ways – they are relational, as He is relational; they are productive, as He is productive; and they embody specific traits, similar to the traits that describe God's nature.

LEADERSHIP PROFILES AND GOD'S IMAGE

We pointed out earlier that leadership models have offered an empirical understanding of successful leadership as related to specific human traits, an orientation toward productivity and task achievement, and an orientation toward the building of human relationships. This body of work is primarily secular in nature, mostly disconnected from any understanding or consideration of a Christian worldview. On the other hand Scripture presents God's design and creation as resulting in humans who reflect (imperfectly) God's own image, and this in terms of his traits/characteristics, his relational and functional/productive natures.

It appears therefore the general revelation of empirical research on leadership matches up closely with the special revelation of Genesis 1. As we can see in **Table 2,** the fundamental nature of leadership reflects the fundamental nature of the *imago dei*.

TABLE 2
IMAGO DEI PERSPECTIVES AND LEADERSHIP MODELS

Imago Dei Perspectives	Substantive View	Functional View	Relational View
Leadership Models	Trait Studies	Production/Task Orientation	People/Relationship Orientation
Leadership Behavior/ Orientations	Intelligence Self-confidence Determination Integrity Sociability Extroversion	Initiating Structure Production Orientation Concern for Production Task Motivated	Consideration Employee Orientation Concern for People Relation Motivated

TRAIT THEORIES AND THE SUBSTANTIVE VIEW

There is imperfect but significant overlap across the traits of successful leaders and the traits humans reflect as image bearers of God. **Table 3** makes these connections. While neither of these lists in **Table 3** is intended to be exhaustive, we can observe certain connections.

TABLE 3
LEADERS TRAITS AND IMAGE BEARERS OF GOD

Trait Theory	Imago Dei (Substantive Perspective)
Intelligence	Reason, intelligence and rationality
Self-confidence	[Confidence in God]
Determination	Creativity and innovativeness
Integrity	Morality, fairness or justice
Sociability and Extroversion	Relational
Note on Love and Order (see below)	Love
	Order and Efficiency

INTELLIGENCE

People who seem to emerge as successful leaders draw from characteristics that God has instilled in His image bearers. For example, research indicates that successful leaders benefit from above-average intelligence (a God-given trait). All humans reflect (more or less) God's nature as intelligent, reasonable creatures, but some are gifted such that they see possibilities, make connections, and understand implications better than the average person. It is significant that leadership research has identified this trait as critical.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

As trait research has shown, great leaders are demonstrably self-confident, or at least project such confidence. After all, who would follow a leader who does not believe in him/herself? Biblical examples of Godly leaders do indeed exhibit confidence that inspires (e.g. David against Goliath, 1 Samuel 17, esp. vv. 32-51). And yet, a biblical understanding of the *imago dei* does not lead us to self-confidence so much as it leads us to confidence in the power, will, goodness, and sovereignty of God (note David's rationale in 1 Samuel 17: 37; 45-47). Great leaders do indeed project confidence, and godly leaders temper this confidence with humility and a proper acknowledgement of God's role as the source of our confidence (Psalm 118: 5-14).

DETERMINATION

Determination has many manifestations, but foundational leadership research refers to great leaders as those who are extraordinarily capable of finding solutions to problems and persistent in leading people to accomplish the tasks at hand. One important element of this trait is the creativity and innovation that we inherit from God's nature, and that is imperative in overcoming obstacles and problems in the path of successful leadership. That is, successful leaders persevere through creative insights and innovative solutions – these made possible through the gift of God's image.

INTEGRITY

It is in many ways comforting that leadership research has consistently demonstrated that successful leaders embody and promote ethical integrity. Followers remain loyal and committed when leaders demonstrate consistent integrity to stated ideals. Humans created in the image of God reflect God's nature in our insistence upon justice, our appreciation for ethical integrity, and our constant search for fairness – however imperfect each of these may be. To be sure, not all leaders demonstrate or pursue a morality/integrity that is

consistent with the will of God, but God's image in us makes this trait prominent in successful leaders.

SOCIABILITY AND EXTRAVERSION

Great leaders have historically been especially comfortable in their public personas, drawing energy from their interactions with others, and giving that energy back in the form of inspiration and motivation. Much of the leadership research has focused on charisma as a manifestation of this trait,[16] but charisma is only one manifestation of sociability and, in fact, often has a dark side in humans. More generally, successful and great leaders are relational (as how we are wired as God's image bearer) in ways that build loyalty and confidence among their followers – a trait that is critical in building the trust necessary to move toward success.

NOTE ON LOVE AND ORDER

It is important to consider areas where research on trait models of leadership does not match up with the trait (substantive) perspective of the *imago dei*. One element is the godly trait of Order. The God of the Bible is a God of order. He creates order out of chaos and has ordered all of creation, including our lives. And yet, seminal work on trait theories of leadership does not mention "order" (or organizing, or efficiency) as a common trait of the great leaders in these studies. This is easily understood when we consider that the "great," successful leaders of these studies were (as later research would unveil) Transformational leaders. Contemporary leadership models distinguish between transformational and transactional leaders, identifying both as necessary at various times and places in organizational life. It is transactional leadership – or leadership that is focused on fulfilling existing goals in a given organizational environment – that emphasizes and makes great use of the order/efficiency trait. In fact there is heavy overlap between transactional leadership and what we typically refer to as Management. Transformational leadership differs in that it is aimed at achieving goals or outcomes that upset (or are contrary to) the existing order, such as in change management, organizational upheaval, or crisis situations. Thus, if trait models of leadership had been extended to include great leaders of the transactional variety, it is likely that "order" would have been prominent in the traits identified.

Similarly, the godly characteristic of "love" is not identified as consistent among the great leaders in the original trait models. Rather, love has emerged as an element of modern leadership models, especially those exploring the traits of authentic leaders,[17] transformational leaders,[18] servant leaders (esp. Spears et. al.),[19] and spiritual leadership.[20] Fry specifically addresses "altruistic love" and faith in building his model of spiritual leadership, and describes some of the traits that spiritually-minded leaders bring to their efforts.[21] That is, love of others – even self-sacrificing love – is increasingly a trait that leadership studies are addressing as we seek to better understand what it is that great leaders do. This is not surprising, as we know that love is the most important trait that humans reflect from their Creator (Matt. 22: 34-40; 1 Cor. 13; 1 John 4: 16).

PRODUCTION/RELATION ORIENTATIONS AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

As noted earlier, the Functional View of the *imago dei* focuses on the productive nature of God and the resulting productive nature of those made in His image, who are invited to share in His good work. The complementary Relational View of the *imago dei* focuses on God's desire to relate to His creation and the resulting relational nature of those created in His image. The scriptures are indeed the story of God's relationship with His people. We can see from Table 1 above that research identifies leaders as exhibiting (generally) a leadership orientation towards either Production or Relationships.

FUNCTIONAL VIEW-PRODUCTION ORIENTATION

The Production orientation of leaders is perfectly consistent with humans reflecting the Functional aspect of God's nature. Humans are created to be functional, or oriented toward the work for which God has created them. This work includes the various mandates in which God has invited humans to share, including the creation mandate (Gen. 1: 28) and, since Christ's time on earth, the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20) and the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5: 16-19). While the Great Commission and ministry of reconciliation are partnerships with God that are specific to those who are redeemed in Christ, the creation mandate is the work of caring for the earth and serving one another. It is a call to caring, building, stewardship, and general work that is applicable to all humans.[22] It is a fundamental reflection of God's nature that humans are driven to work, to create, to achieve, and to be an active part of the unfolding of the world in which they have been placed. Thus, we should be comfortable with the observation that many successful leaders are primarily driv-

en to produce. They are motivated by a sense of accomplishment that is manifest in their work with, and through, others to achieve important goals.

RELATIONAL VIEW-RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION

Being relational in this sense involves more than simply having a relationship with others. It is this characteristic of God that leads Him to love, and to sacrifice for the good of those with whom He desires this special relationship. Humans likewise seek relationships, seek and give love, and build communities and societies. They develop a genuine care for the well-being of others. Many successful leaders are oriented in this way specifically. To be sure some of the relational orientation of leaders is pragmatic – seeking to meet the needs of other people so as to gain their cooperation in pursuit of organizational goals. But research also shows that many leaders are genuine, even altruistic, in their interest in the well-being of followers and other organizational actors. More recent leadership models emphasize this relational element to a greater extent than did classical leadership models.[23] It is therefore obvious that leadership practice demonstrates (and leadership models confirm) that the relational perspective of *imago dei* accurately predicts how humans will pursue leadership efforts.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Having established that (1) classical leadership models emphasize leader traits, as well as leader orientations toward production and/or relationships, and (2) the common perspectives of the *imago dei* match up significantly with these leadership research findings, Christian leaders need to be intentional in understanding God's character so that they can lead accordingly.

An important step in this process is seeking to recognize our own leadership styles as reflective of our unique gifting, and God's design. Most people engage in leadership roles with little understanding of their own leadership style and strengths. Which of the traits and characteristics of great leaders do we have in abundance? Which ones are lacking? Is it possible to improve in any of these areas? We don't all have the natural-born leader traits as described in the Great Man theories, but we do reflect God's characteristics as part of the *imago dei.*

Are we more Production/Task oriented, or more People/Relationship oriented? Do we view people (followers) as a means to an end, or as an end in themselves? The reality is that we are both of these things. God's word indicates that we are an end in ourselves – He sent His Son to die to save us (John 3:16), and even more amazing, while we were still sinners He died for us (Romans 5: 8). That is, God sets the example that other people are an end in themselves – they are worthy of our love, care, efforts, and sacrifice. At the same time, people are a means to an end in the leadership context. Again, God sets the example. God consistently used His created people to accomplish various tasks, goals, and His own will. Even today, we are invited to join in the ministry of reconciliation, although He does not "need" us for His will to be accomplished.

That being said, we are called to love those we lead, and to lead those we love. They are the means of production (achievement), and they are the end of our efforts – "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22: 39). Each of us needs to seek to understand our natural leadership orientations in terms of how God has created us, and to build strengths out of the traits with which God has blessed us. Thus:

1. Seek to understand your own leadership traits and orientations;[24]
2. Seek to reflect God's image more fully through these leadership opportunities;
3. Seek to love and lead your neighbor as a means to accomplishing God's will, and as a divinely-loved end in him/herself.

In this process, we aim to accomplish two outcomes that help build our capacity as effective leaders – develop on the leadership strengths we identify in ourselves, and mitigate the "absences" we uncover.

DEVELOP EXISTING LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

However we attain an understanding of our own leadership strengths, whether through experience, or through assessment techniques (such as those found in the Northouse text discussed earlier), we cannot rest on those presumed laurels. In order to enhance these leadership capabilities, we recognize that:

- Some things can be changed and some cannot - As we study the lists of traits that "great" leaders have projected, we may be strong in some of those capacities and not in others. We may not be able to change our intelligence as a leader, but we can continually increase our education to make use of the intelligence that we do have. Many business people make the mistake of minimizing educational opportunities once their formal educational paths are "completed." Even those who are highly intelligent will never exhaust their intellectual gifts, and so will always benefit from continuing educational efforts. Further, each of the other traits that characterize great leadership potential can be sharpened, even if they cannot be created. At the same time, it is important that we understand that we cannot change our introversion into extraversion. Yet we can learn sociability behaviors that are valuable, even if they are relatively foreign to us.
- If we are relationally-inclined, we are not likely to become a leader who focuses primarily on task/production processes. We must continue to build, innovate, and model this capacity for whom it is not natural. We are likely to be well-served through new HRM and/or Mediation certifications and training as ways to develop these existing leadership strengths. Alternatively, if we are task (production outcome)-inclined, we must maximize our potential as this kind of leader by continually learning and creating new paths to mutual success along these lines. Perhaps we would pursue Project Management training and certification, or Supply Chain Management and Logistics certifications to enhance our natural leadership profile. We must continually expand our capacity to lead people according to the strengths we already have.

MITIGATE IDENTIFIED "ABSENCES"

A companion insight from these discussions is to seek to mitigate the "absences" in our own leadership profile. I use the word absences because I am not convinced that the possession of all leadership capabilities is necessary to qualify a highly effective leader. While we work to build upon the strengths related to our dominant leadership capabilities, it does not automatically follow that lacking other capacities is a weakness. So, rather than lamenting our "weaknesses," we intentionally work to complement the leadership capabilities that are absent in our own profiles. We do this through enhanced awareness of our deficits and complementary team-building:

- Awareness - In this paper we have identified and summarized leadership capabilities that are known to be useful, effective, and necessary (i.e., traits, relational and production orientations). We become more effective as a leader to the extent that we recognize the leadership strengths we have, as well as the deficits in our portfolio. Continuous self-assessment and feedback is critical in the process of discerning the limitations of our own leadership profile and capacity.
- Complementary leadership assets - Having recognized the balance of strengths and absences in our own leadership portfolio, we must aim to become better where we are able to do so, and remedy where we are not. For example, if we are a particularly relationship-oriented leader, there is likely a ceiling as to how effective we can be in the task/production elements of the leadership journey. But we can move closer to that ceiling by developing habits of production orientation, and acquiring tools that shore up these areas of responsibility. Specifically we can build teams around our leadership efforts that include other members who are more naturally inclined toward the areas where the leader needs help.

LEADING IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

The most valued application we can discern from our discussion is how to better connect our (or your) leadership profile, and efforts, to a growing understanding of laboring in the image of God. Here we aim for three goals: to be the leader God has created us to be; to use our leadership gifts according to God's calling; and use our leadership efforts to build communities that glorify God.

TO BE THE VESSEL GOD CREATED US TO BE

As a leader we uniquely reflect God's image in the ways He designed us and uses us for the purposes He intends. We are not made simply to maximize profit, to lead people to accomplish organizational goals, or simply to build esprit de corps and camaraderie. We are made to glorify God in our

leadership work and love our neighbors as we serve followers, customers, clients, students, or whomever crosses our paths. We are relational in leadership because God is a relational God. We are productive in leadership because God is a productive God. We are inspirational and motivational and transformational in leadership because God has designed us to be like Him. We are not any of these things for the sake of our own glory, or our own career, or our own worldly success, but because this is (we are) the vessel through which God chooses to continue the good work of His creation.

DON'T SEPARATE THE GIFT FROM THE CALLING

It is of paramount importance that those of us who seek to represent Christ in the marketplace actually do so. That is, we must not separate our leadership talents and gifts from the reasons God has given them to us. Many of us have a tendency to build walls between (compartmentalize) the various valuable aspects of our lives, including work, family, and faith. We must remind one another that the leadership gifts we have are tied to the unique calling God has placed on our lives. Our leadership opportunities are the ministry laid before us, and there are relational, productive, motivational, and spiritual elements in all of them.

Leading in the image of God means: to be the leader God has created us to be; to use our leadership gifts according to God's calling; and use our leadership efforts to build communities that glorify God.

LEADERSHIP AS COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Whatever our leadership strengths/tendencies, we must build a leadership team/capacity that accomplishes four critical goals:

1. **Instills confidence and inspiration in followers** – this based on the trail that God has laid before us to blaze.
2. **Acknowledge and meet the needs of followers** - Jeff Van Duzer asserts that one of the primary reasons that God ordains business is to provide meaningful work for people.[25] That is, we provide work for people who, like their leaders, are created in the image of God. Leaders reflecting the image of God will build teams that create opportunities for others to glorify God through the work to which He has called them. This is critical.
3. **Seek to build human relationships as well as results** - A leader who is living out his/her calling in Christ is always a participant in the ongoing ministry of reconciliation, even if his/her natural strength is not of the relational kind. The functional view of the image of God reminds us that we are invited to be co-laborers with God in the ongoing work of creation and redemption. At the same time, it is God's will that our leadership efforts are to meet the needs, including relational, of followers and of leaders. Because we reflect God's relational nature, our organizational leadership efforts are a means to meeting the relational needs of all organizational actors.
4. **Seek to restore/add/create organizational value** – this as an extension and manifestation of God's ongoing mandate of creation. That is, in community, balanced leadership teams are indeed focused on production and task goals, or outcomes that glorify God by creating value that meets the needs of all organizational stakeholders, internal and external. This is the means by which leaders and other organizational actors live out the greatest commandment – loving their neighbors as themselves.

In the end, we cannot, and should not, separate our organizational leadership efforts from our mandate to live out the *imago dei* as a new creation in Christ.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the body of classical research on leadership points to three key findings: great leaders share similar traits, many leaders tend toward a production or task orientation in their leadership efforts, and other leaders tend toward a people or relationship orientation in their leadership efforts. We also recognize that the biblical concept of *imago dei* carries three primary perspectives: substantive (characteristic or trait), functional (production), and relational. The secular models of leadership thus offer surprising parallels to the image of God in human leadership profiles. This is both inspiring and motivational in the sense that it helps Christians see our leadership potentials in the context of God's image and provides a framework in which we evaluate and improve our strengths and weaknesses as we lead to redeem businesses for the glory of God.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

[1] S. Kerr and J.M. Jermier, "Substitutes for Leadership: Their Meaning and Measurement," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* 22 (1978), 375-403.

[2] See, for example, Henry Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, TN.: B&H Academic, 2007); David Dockery (ed.), *Christian Leadership Essentials: A Handbook for Managing Christian Organizations.* (Nashville, TN.: B&H Academic, 2011); B. Robinson, *Incarnate Leadership: 5 Leadership Lessons from the Life of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016); and K. Blanchard and P. Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville, TN.: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

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[13] For example, see Stogdill, *Handbook*.

[14] For example, see Fiedler, "Contingency Model."

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[21] Fry, "Toward a Theory."

[22] See Wendell Berry's discussion of "usufruct" in "God and Country," in W. Berry, *What are People for: Essays* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 1990), 95-102.

[23] Avolio and Gardner, "Authentic Leadership."

[24] A powerful aid in this process is the collection of leadership self-assessment instruments at the end of each chapter in Northouse, *Leadership*.

[25] Jeff Van Duzer, *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to be Fixed)* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010).