

# Ministry and management: convergence, divergence and prospects

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The departure point for this review is the publication of Peter Rudge's *Ministry and Management* in 1968 (Rudge, 1968). That book was a published version of Rudge's PhD thesis at Leeds University, which in turn grew out of a Diploma at St Augustine's College, Canterbury, entitled *A New Approach to the Study of Ecclesiastical Administration*. The examiner of the original Diploma wrote, 'Mr Rudge took a considerable risk in settling on his subject. He was not making a new approach to an old subject but a new approach to a new subject'<sup>1</sup>.

From our perspective half-a-century later, we can understand the examiner's comment. Rudge was exploring new ground, or at least linking hitherto separate disciplines. It is beyond our scope to trace what Grundy (1992) describes as the scandal of the separation of church and industry since the Reformation, which has led to the mutual marginalisation of Christianity and business (Higginson, 2002: 1). But we can note that Rudge did not start with a blank canvas. His debt to such thinkers as Max Weber is obvious. But I should like to highlight two publications which Rudge references:

The Management of Innovation (Burns & Stalker, 1961), like Rudge's book, was published by the Tavistock. The authors contrast linear approaches to innovation with an organic approach. More than five decades later, such writing has a remarkable contemporary feel.

John Adair had published a paper in *Theology* calling for a staff college for the Church of England (Adair, 1962). Adair worked at the British Army's Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst (motto 'serve to lead').

These two publications prompt us to consider the convergences and divergences that have happened since.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Undated paper (c1964) in Rudge Archive at Sarum College. I am most grateful to Sarum's librarian, Jayne Downey, for help in accessing this fascinating archive (<a href="http://www.sarum.ac.uk/library">http://www.sarum.ac.uk/library</a>).

### **Developments**

We now move forward a decade. In retrospect, 1977 was a significant year. Once again, I will highlight two publications.

First, the *Harvard Business Review* published an article which posed the question, Managers and Leaders: Are They Different? (Zaleznik, 1977). Zaleznik answered his own question in the affirmative, ushering in an era where leadership is what all should aspire to, while management is for the 'also rans'. It triggered a series of epithets, such as "Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things" (variously attributed to Peter Drucker and Warren Bennis). John Adair subsequently labelled this the Zaleznik Error, 'the making of a false dichotomy between "leaders" and "managers" (Adair, 2005:64).

Secondly, an essay written by a Quaker executive at AT&T began to receive wider attention. Robert Greenleaf's *The Servant as Leader* (Greenleaf, 1977 [2002]) was inspired by Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*. It would be fascinating to study the popularity of servant leadership concept in the decades since (e.g, did it receive so much attention during the Thatcher-Reagan years?). What is undeniable is the impact it has had on church thinking about leadership. For a critique of the churches' uncritical acceptance of servant leadership, see Zaragoza (1999).

1977 was also the year that James McGregor Burns was completing his influential *Leadership* (Burns, 1978). This drew attention to the difference between transactional and transformational leadership. Relational aspects of leadership were subsequently developed, although the language of LMX – leader-member exchange theory – sounds remarkably transactional (Uhl-Bien, 2006). The influence of complexity sciences began to be felt (Wheatley, 2006[1992]), although later refinements recognised the need for a mix with traditional models (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Writers such as Donna Ladkin (2010) drew attention to the aesthetics of leadership. A strand that should resonate with those in the Judaeo-Christian tradition is the importance of narrative: scholars such as Yiannis Gabriel and David Sims could organise storytelling seminars in a University School of Management<sup>2</sup>.

The focus was not just on leaders, but on ways of organising (Pettigrew et al., 2003). From Japan came insights into knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) and quality. The latter movement was led by an American, W Edwards Deming, and led to enterprise-wide processes (TQM, Lean, Six Sigma) across the world.

The Critical Management School, CMS, has challenged many assumptions (Gray & Wilmott, 2005). Examples of areas include the focus on power,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>http://www.bath.ac.uk/management/news\_events/events/storytelling-seminar/, accessed 31 August 2014.

questions of identity and social constructionism (Ford et al., 2008), and especially postmodern understandings. CMS has struggled to break out from the academic environment in which it developed, exacerbated by a particular language and, perhaps, the fundamental challenge associated with biting off the hand that feeds you.

### Convergence

The last decades of last century saw a blooming of writing about management (and, increasingly, leadership) and organisations. The churches reacted with varying speed to these developments. A few examples to illustrate:

Hamel & Prahalad's *Competing for the Future* (1994) promoted the 'core competence of the corporation'. Did we see echoes in the research on marks of healthy churches, one of which was 'Does a few things and does them well' (Warren: 2004)?

Peter Senge's *Fifth Discipline* (1992) popularised the idea of the learning organization (note that he was also deeply engaged in systems thinking, an aspect highlighted by Rudge). Senge's work informs, for example, David Heywood's *Reimagining Ministry* (2011).

Arie de Geus' *Living Company* (1997) explored an organic approach to organisations, again something that Rudge had highlighted. Friesen<sup>3</sup> (2009: 127) applied de Geus' four signs of a living company to American churches:

- Sensitivity to environment: learning, adapting, changing
- Cohesion & differentiated identity
- Tolerance of (some) diversity
- Administrative stewardship (in Rudge's language, ecclesiastical administration).

A number of scholarly publications have appeared over the years on organisational and management aspects of congregations and faith-based organisations and their management (Hopewell, 1987; Harris, 1998; Torry, 2005, forthcoming). But the literature is predominantly in the area of practice. Examples of straightforward management advice applied to churches (primarily at the congregational level) include Behrens (2008) in the UK and Bacher & Cooper-White (2007) in the US.

The focus on the individual leader is a relatively recent development. Rudge operated against a wider background: his original work came in the aftermath of Vatican II. And it is to a Roman Catholic cardinal we now turn, as we begin to explore organisational understandings of ministry and management.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Friesen belongs to the (US-based) Emergent Village network, which has produced some of the most striking writing about churches and organisation. Myers' *Organic Community* (2007) is another good example. Pagitt & Jones (2007) offers a collection of writings from this stable.

Avery Dulles' *Models of the Church* (Dulles, 1987) and Gareth Morgan's *Images of Organization* (Morgan, 2006[1986]) both explore ways of organising. It is arguable that management thinkers have developed questions of organisation further than church thinkers. We might offer a number of reasons for this:

- 1. The focus on the individual leader.
- 2. A narrow understanding of ecclesiology.
- 3. Questions of governance: conference, synod, Presbyterian, congregational, independent, episcopal... have the different implications been properly understood?

Another area of convergence surrounds monastic and religious traditions. The Rule of St Benedict has aroused most interest (Dollard et al., 2002), with Jesuit (Lowney, 2003) and Trappist (Turak, 2013) also featuring. It is, perhaps, surprising that St Francis has not received more attention in the organisational field, as opposed to, eg creation spirituality.

Lastly, we can note how religious imagery is used in management writings. Examples include 'messiah' (Western, 2013), 'priest' (Hatch et al., 2005), 'prophet' (Green & Cooper 1998), 'saint', (Alvesson, 2011) and 'savior' (Khurana, 2002). Harle (2007) explored the interplay between five managerial mindsets in a *Harvard Business Review* article and five biblical images in the Church of England's *Ordinal*.

# Organisational responses<sup>4</sup>

In the period under review, a number of key institutions have made a particular contribution to issues of ministry and management. I can highlight three:

Tavistock Institute for Human Relations. We saw *Ministry and Management* was published under the Tavistock imprint. Their influence continues, e.g. Western (2013).

**Grubb Institute.** The key figure was Bruce Reed (Reed, 1978). The Grubb shared many ideas with the Tavistock, and continued to have a significant impact through their consultancy work for many years.

**Alban Institute**. US-based, with a focus at a congregational level. They published a range of well-received books (e.g. Steinke, 1996; Rendle, 1998) and provide consultancy services.

A number of consultancies and networks have operated in this area. Many shared links through key individuals, including Peter Rudge, George Lovell and Malcolm Grundy<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> I am grateful to Peter Rudge, Malcolm Grundy and John Nelson for their help in tracing some of these historical developments.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It would be fascinating to trace some of these links, perhaps in the style of Pete Frame's *Rock Family Trees*!

We may identify:

Avec (1976-1994). A consultancy (Lovell, 1996). A recent excellent book on consultancy (Dadswell, 2011) is an heir to this tradition.

www.avecresources.org

CORAT (Christian Organisations Research and Advisory Team) (c.1969-1991). Peter Rudge was a key player in its formation: its reach spread to Australasia and Africa, where it continued after the UK arm evolved into MODEM. www.corat.org

### Edward King Institute for Ministerial Development (1986-2004).

Established by Norman Todd and Christopher Laurence, EKIMD aimed to encourage best practice in churches and the exchange of experimental experience. Ministry Development Consultations were based at King's College, London, then expanded nationally. Barbara Wright and Malcom Grundy developed parallel programmes for lay members of congregations.

Foundation for Church Leadership (2004-2012). The rationale for the founding of FCL is described in Turnbull (2004). Under its Director, Malcolm Grundy, FCL published reviews of training schemes. Its legacy has been taken over by Westcott House, Cambridge.

MODEM (1994-date). Modem was born as an ecumenical network after the closure of CORAT. They have published five books, the first of which, *Management and Ministry*, reversed Rudge's original title (Nelson, 1996). Modem continues to organise annual conferences. <a href="https://www.modem-uk.org">www.modem-uk.org</a>

While some of these organisations provided consultancy and training services (Avec, CORAT, EKIMD), others existed to promote interest and shared learning (FCL, MODEM). The churches' willingness to engage in – and pay for – the former was crucial to their existence.

## Divergence

Until now, we have been considering approaches which have been broadly sympathetic to the endeavour of linking ministry and management. However, not all responses have been so sympathetic. Rudge speaks of the "ridicule" with which his administrative training was received, compared with his theological training<sup>6</sup>.

We can group reactions in two main areas.

1. Management and ministry deal with different areas of life.

This approach is summarised in the title of a recent US book, *Brothers, We are* Not *Professional* (Piper, 2013)<sup>7</sup>. It can be seen in responses to a key

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Personal communication, August 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Julian Gotobed's *Ministry and Management* conference presentation, 'ls Christian ministry pastoral and professional? A Baptist perspective'.

Church of England report, *Working as One Body*, often referred to as the Turnbull Report after the Chair of the committee which produced it (Church of England, 1995). Nigel McCullough, then Bishop of Wakefield, offers a typical response: 'What deeply worries me is the way in which, often uncritically, we are adopting too many of the assumptions and techniques of modern management. That is not to deny that there are some good ideas from the secular world which the church could adapt, and indeed does, with advantage. But, increasingly, I am persuaded that the proper context for reviewing and developing ministry ought not to be quasi-management but spiritual direction' (quoted in Gill, 1997: 110)<sup>8</sup>.

2. Responses such as that are closely linked to a criticism of a managerialist tendency, itself often linked with the fashionable trend of New Public Management<sup>9</sup>. Two representative authors, who view developments critically are Stephen Pattison (Pattison, 1997) and Richard Roberts. Roberts writes passionately of 'a compromised institutional and established religion that drinks deeply from the poisoned well of managerialism' (Roberts, 2000: 95). In a powerful phrase, Roberts laments the 'commodification of the soul' (Roberts, 2002). Not all would consider managerialism irredeemable; for example, Eve Poole published an article (Poole, 2008), which started life as a Society for the Study of Christian Ethics conference presentation entitled 'In Praise of Managerialism'.

Lewis-Anthony (2013) provides a lively critique, based on a PhD thesis, which focuses on questions around the contested notion of leadership. Links with the CMS critique of mainstream management teaching would be an area to investigate further.

## Meanwhile, in other developments...

There are several developments over the past half-century in closely related areas that deserve our attention. Given the constraints of the current paper, I can only list some of them here. Some may be explored further as the research project progresses.

The world of work. Significant theological work (e.g. Volf, 2001[1991]; Cosden, 2004; Larive, 2004) has explored Christian approaches to work. A number of popular accounts have been published in the UK (Greene, 2001; Costa, 2007), though academic study tends to focus more on the US (Hicks, 2003; Miller, 2007).

Spirituality and work. Ian Mitroff is a respected management educator and consultant, whose writing features in the *Harvard Business Review*. His coauthorship of *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace* (Mitroff & Denton, 1999) introduced many to a diffuse movement. Biberman & Whitty (2000) bring

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See Mark Wakelin's *Ministry and Management* conference presentation, 'Responses of Methodist ministers to Ministerial Development Review – a case for research led policy making'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See Chris Bond's *Ministry and Management* conference presentation, 'Leadership for public service – does

the Methodist Church offer an alternative to "public management"?'

together a wide range of authors, while Howard & Welbourn (2004) provide a good introduction from a UK perspective. Some, while sympathetic, raise concerns about an uncritical acceptance of spirituality ideas (Case & Gosling, 2010), while others point to real dangers (Tourish & Tourish, 2010).

Interfaith perspectives. Authors in the Jewish tradition have deep insights. For example, Pava (2003) highlights the concept of the covenant: 'it is more meaningful and pragmatic for leaders to think of organizations generally, from businesses to universities, as being less like machines than like covenants, shared agreements among equal partners' (pxiv). 'Hesed [steadfast love] is the glue that holds covenants together' (p5). Friedman (2007) combines his training as a rabbi with insights from family systems theory. Beyond the Judaeo-Christian tradition, insights from Eastern practice are often cited, especially mindfulness (Sinclair, 2007), while non-Western indigenous forms of organising are increasingly being seen as providing stimulating challenges and exemplars (Turnbull et al., 2012). For a broadranging symposium representing a number of faith traditions, see Case et al. (2012).

# Theological insights

One of the challenges taken up by Rudge and his successors has been to engage rigorously in underlying questions of theology alongside sociology and organisational studies. This was a feature of several reviews of *Ministry and Management*<sup>10</sup>, and has cropped up since. A good example is provided by Watkins (1991). Reflecting on structural change from a Methodist perspective, Beck (2000: 109) begins with two deeply theological considerations: the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. These provide us with two perspectives to explore. We could explore many other theological motifs, such as liberation. I have chosen a third, creation, to illustrate the possibilities for interdisciplinary exploration open to us.

The Trinity. The significance of the Holy Trinity was a key element in Catholic teaching that emerged from Vatican II. The influence has extended significantly since. Pickard (2009) writes theologically from an Australian Anglican perspective, while Holmes (2006) describes the practical implications in a 'new church'. Greenwood (1994: 152) provides a representative summary: 'In a Trinitarian ecclesiology, order is not provided or imposed by a single group, permanently over against another, but by the fluctuating movement in relationship of the personal participants... In a perichoretic community of love, a self-ordering process takes place in which, although individual persons will fulfil unique and necessary roles, the total ordering is achieved without any one being in a permanently subordinate position to another'.

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 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 10}$  Rudge Archive, which also includes a personal commendation of Watkins' later article.

Incarnation. Phrases associated with this approach include 'risk taking', 'boundary spanning' and an emphasis on the 'ordinary'. Robinson (2009) provides a slim, but thoughtful, guide from a Christian perspective. But it is noticeable how many of these ideas are taken up in the management literature. Ernst & Chrobot-Mason (2011) report on research into boundary-spanning from the respected Center for Creative Leadership. In an evocative turn of phrase, two critical Scandinavian management scholars describe 'the extra-ordinarisation of the mundane' (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003), while Harrison (2007) writes from the everyday world of temporary staff agencies on the importance for managers of decency and small gestures. The question of risk taking leads us towards the whole question of control in organisations (and in churches, in wider society and, indeed, our personal lives). Kester Brewin's extraordinary book of applied Christology (Brewin, 2004=2007) provides a link to that topic.<sup>11</sup>

Creation. In her book, *Face of the Deep*<sup>12</sup>, Catherine Keller argues that Christian theology 'systematically and symbolically sought to erase the chaos of creation' (2003: xvi). Rather than a linear series of steps imposing order, the first chapter of Genesis is read as a calling forth, a letting be, of order from chaos. O'Murchu (2004) offers an important observation for attitudes to organising: 'The major problem confronting us is not the chaos itself but our attitudes toward it. By and large, we *deny* its very existence, because we are scared of its impact... Denial, more than anything else, is what we use to subvert the potential creativity of chaos' (p138, italics orig.). Using a framework from complexity theory, I have suggested the 'formless void' of Genesis 1 as an alternative to traditional organisational templates (Harle, 2012).

### Some current issues and emerging trends

Against this background, I should like to make some observations on current trends. To take one example of the terrain, Atkins (2010[2007]) offers a perspective which transcends the Methodist tradition in which he stands. His consideration includes ecclesiology, place, mission, renewal, ministry and leadership. The following list does not claim to be exhaustive, but highlights some fruitful areas for mutual exploration around ministry and management.

From a leadership to an organisational focus. Recent years have seen a great deal of attention, in books and training programmes, on leadership in churches. For all the talk of collaborative ministry, the focus is often on an individual leader. Going back to where we started, one of the great messages to come out of Vatican II was the importance of subsidiarity, of making decisions at the lowest possible level in the hierarchy. We might then expect the Roman Catholic Church to be an exemplar of distributed leadership

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See Charity Hamilton's *Ministry and Management* conference presentation, 'Embodied approaches to management – incarnation as organisation'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> This book contains perhaps my all-time favourite interdisciplinary quote: 'As with Irenaeus' Christology, so with Ilya Prigogine's nonlinear dynamics' (p56).

(Raelin, 2003). The reality feels rather different. A recent book (Elford, 2013) is one of the first to address change at an organisational level, building on a particular systems theory (again, echoing something found in Rudge's *Ministry and Management*).

Understanding ecclesiologies. Churches would benefit from a better and broader under-standing of different ecclesiologies. Questions of governance, doctrine or worship have become too narrowly understood. A thoroughgoing approach is offered by Clark (e.g. 2008), who considers the implications of an approach based on diakonia. Davison & Milbank (2010) offer a peculiarly English approach, while Jewell & Ramey (2010) report on a US Roman Catholic project. They note how 'emerging models of leadership and parish structures call for a new worldview, one that allows us to see the invitation and gift of the Spirit as it emerges. This change is organic, happening throughout the structure, moving forward as the Spirit invites. It is now the task of the church to begin understanding the theological implications of these changes and how they are consistent with the tradition of the church' (p100). The significance for ecclesiology is not always explicit, e.g. Gay (2011: 9) quotes Pete Ward on how the 'worship song' has become as central to some churches' self-definition as historically the eucharist has been in Catholic traditions or the sermon in Reformed ones. Tensions involved in inherited and new models of church are evident, with authors such as Alan Roxburgh happy to work through existing denominations (Roxburgh & Romanuk, 2006), while Alan Hirsch calls for radically new beginnings (Hirsch & Catchim, 2012). Combining an understanding of lex orandi, lex credenda with Schein's (2010[1985]) work on organisational culture could yield fascinating insights<sup>13</sup>. Heather Höpfl, who combines the perspectives of a critical management scholar with a theologically informed Roman Catholicism, makes pertinent observations in her closely observed article, 'The Making of a Corporate Acolyte' (1991).

Emergence and emergent churches. For some time, there have been growing references to emerging or emergent churches. Tickle (2012) distinguishes the terms, but my concern is different. From an organisational perspective, some emerging churches appear to operate in a paradigm of individualised leadership and close control. Here, the publication of Moynagh (2012) is hugely significant. Someone who has been at the heart of the emerging church/ fresh expressions movement has brought to bear insights from complexity theory, where emergence takes on a particular meaning. Moynagh was introduced to these ideas by a review of the Methodist Church's Venture FX scheme (Cosstick, 2011). The implications are still being worked out. At this stage, I would highlight the significance of questions of control (note the complexity reading of Genesis 1) and the importance of conversations, especially Patricia Shaw's (2002) work, based on Ralph Stacey's work on complex responsive processes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The *Church Times* review of *Ministry and Management* concludes by hinting at a possible liturgical perspective on administration and organisation (27 December 1968, p6). Rudge Archive.

The mixed economy. When he introduced the term 'mixed economy' to describe a world of inherited and emergent churches, the former Archbishop of Canterbury would surely have appreciated the resonance of the term *oikonomos*, originally household management. But have churches thought through the insights from the business world (and, indeed, third sector, where some NGOs and charities operate effectively as multinational corporations)? Are churches still operating as bureaucracies in a world which has for years been used to outsourcing and joint ventures, and is now dealing with networks and virtual organisations (Mabey et al., 1998). The McDonalization thesis – efficiency, calculability, predictability, control (Ritzer, 2013[1993]) – is clearly relevant, and has been applied to churches (Drane, 2000). Fancourt (2013) rightly observes how close some postmodern ecclesial activities are getting to brand management. It is not then a great step to franchising.

Ministry and management in a networked world. A research project commissioned by the Bertelsmann Foundation on the implications of Web 2.0 identified a number of indicators of the need for a new paradigm. These include viewing leadership as a collective process, from viewing organisations as machines to organisms, and the need to move from planning and controlling to learning and adapting (McGonagill & Doerffer, 2011: 23-28). The study draws attention to Charlene Li's work (2010), which begins with the importance of leaders in a networked world being able to recognise from the beginning that they are not in control. Once again, there are echoes of our reading of Genesis 1.

Entrepreneurs. One further observation. It strikes me that there are similarities between some of our most 'successful' church leaders, whether church planters or brand managers, and entrepreneurial business leaders. Bolton (2006) introduces the topic, while de Woot (2013: 29-43) discusses entrepreneurship and creation in a thoughtful book influenced by Catholic social teaching This area would benefit from further interdisciplinary research covering such questions as governance and leadership personalities.

## **Future prospects**

So much for a review of fifty years of developments and some contemporary issues. We started with the Examiner's comments from Peter Rudge's Diploma. While we may agree that he did, indeed, take a considerable risk in settling on his subject, I wonder if the subject was not so new after all. The decades since Rudge's 1968 book have seen organisational scholars rediscovering ancient wisdom from Lao Tzu to Aristotle, from Benedict to Machiavelli (Grint, 1997). I firmly believe that further insights can be gained by continuing the conversations across disciplines. But there are dangers, not least in the drive through academic regulation to a more siloed mentality (Harle, forthcoming), and the retreat of some church communities from engaging with service providers beyond their own confines. Now, more than ever, is a time for conversations and mutual learning (Wenger, 1998). The

church has a rich tradition of narrative and stories that can be shared with business organizations as they seek to understand themselves and their environment (Keel, 2007).

As we started by considering one book, I should like to consider a more recent publication as representative of the prospects ahead of us. The title of Mike Bonem's (2012) book, In Pursuit of Great AND Godly Leadership, includes a conscious echo of Jim Collins' best-selling Good to Great (2001). Bonem's book is subtitled, 'Tapping the Wisdom of the World for the Kingdom of God'. It has its limitations – it confines itself almost entirely to mainstream North American business school, and church, thinking – but it is an indication of what might be achieved. But let the final word rest with a recognised global authority on management. Gary Hamel<sup>14</sup> is blunt in his analysis of the financial tsunami of 2008: 'The worst economic downturn since the 1930s wasn't a banking crisis, a credit crisis, or a mortgage crisis – it was a moral crisis' (2012: 10). He calls for a new approach to management, which he terms Management 2.0, and concludes thus:

To build Management 2.0, we need more than engineers and accountants. We must also harness the ideas of artists, philosophers, designers, ecologists, anthropologists, and theologians. (p.254)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Hamel is one of a growing number of management thinkers who have spoken not just at business schools, but at a Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit

 $<sup>(\</sup>underline{\text{http://www.willowcreek.com/events/leadership/}})$  . Jim Collins is another.

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