

# **Business Practice, Spiritual Practice, and Leadership: Blurring Boundaries & Foraging for Insights**

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Our topic this weekend is leadership, particularly “leadership for change.” This is a broad and complicated subject, with many facets that we could explore. The facet that most intrigues me, and that I want to focus on this morning, has to do with the possible connections between management and leadership on the one hand and spiritual practice on the other. Specifically, I want to explore how the insights and convictions that derive from our spiritual practices as Friends may align with some of the best practices of organizational management to create more effective leadership in all kinds of organizations.

I want to consider how these spiritual and business practices might be particularly helpful in “leading for change.” Finally I will suggest there may be a paradox at the heart of leading for change exposed by taking this perspective, a paradox that is central to Quaker faith and practice, and which may turn the relationship between leading and following inside-out.

But let me begin with some definitions of leadership to better define the pivotal concept for the rest of this conversation.

## **§ What Are “Leaders” and What Do They Do?**

“Leadership” can mean many things. There is no shortage of definitions of leadership in the literature on business and organizations, and we may profit from looking at a few of these.

The late John Gardner, a remarkable scholar and exceptional leader wrote: “Leadership is the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.”<sup>1</sup>

This definition best describes the sort of leadership exercised in an organization or a movement. Still, its utility is notable in that it describes well what leaders may do in a wide range of settings and for divergent purposes. This describes, for instance, what someone like Dorothy Day did in building the radical, pacifist Catholic Workers movement, but it also accurately portrays what an

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Gardner, *On Leadership*, 1990, p.1.

exceptional military officer does in preparing and leading his or her troops to success in battle – two radically different purposes and contexts for leadership.

What differs in a leader's work in these examples? What differs are the tools or strategies of persuasion the leaders would likely use, and the purposes for which they exercise leadership. It is important to note this because once we start a discussion about tools and purposes (or means and ends) we begin a conversation about the ethical dimensions of leadership as well as the practical value of various approaches.

Reflecting on both these facets of leadership – the moral and the practical – is clearly crucial for leaders in a religious or humanitarian organization. But I would argue it is equally important in business or government entities. In my view, whenever we are making choices about the ways we lead and why we lead we are always making ethical as well as practical judgments.

These questions come to the fore in definitions of leadership proposed by James McGregor Burns, perhaps the father of modern “leadership studies.” Burns is interested not only in how leaders get things done, but also in how they see the purpose of their work. He sees “leadership” as a relationship where some persons [leaders] mobilize resources, which may be material, political, or psychological, to motivate others [followers] to realize goals held by both.

Burns distinguishes between two types of leadership – transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership he sees primarily as an exercise of power.<sup>2</sup> This model centers on exchanging specific rewards or benefits for performance, obedience, or loyalty. Transactional leadership is generally utilitarian in its focus and centers on incentives and rewards. This kind of leadership does not usually involve an appeal to higher ideals or motivations.

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is more about “... engaging the fuller person of the follower.”<sup>3</sup> *Transformational leaders elicit from their followers commitments to action toward a shared goal by persuading them of a value or purpose for that action which is beyond a simple reward.* These leaders connect to higher ideals their followers hold. So, for example, Martin Luther King drew his followers to work for racial justice – work that paid little or nothing, was full of hardships and fraught with danger – by articulating and embodying a vision of a better world, and mapping a path to that vision, which moved and sustained them.

Transactional and transformational leadership are not mutually exclusive. An entrepreneur building a company around a new, socially valuable product may be able to motivate her employees with both monetary rewards and the potential satisfaction of creating something that truly could improve the world. Employees may even trade off working for a higher purpose for a lower salary. Employees' commitments may be engaged by both kinds of incentives.

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<sup>2</sup> James McGregor Burns, *Leadership*, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Burns, p.4.

In a context where labor is primarily voluntary, as in many nonprofit organizations (like churches), the only rewards a leader may have to offer followers may be social or psychological. Then taking a transformational approach to leadership may be vital. This suggests that the character of leadership may necessarily be shaped as much by the type of organization and its purposes as by the traits of a leader.

This is a one premise of a fine book on leadership by the historian Garry Wills. Wills offers a very concise definition. He says, “A leader is one who mobilizes others toward a goal shared by leader and followers.”<sup>4</sup>

*The sharing of goals is a first, necessary condition, Wills argues, to make the relationship of leader and follower possible, and to give effective leadership its character.* He notes much of the literature on leadership focuses on attributes and skills of leaders. This makes sense, he concedes, because leaders may have to employ a variety of techniques to mobilize followers, since diverse followers may have diverse motives for participating in an organization or movement.

However, Wills concludes that in the end purpose trumps strategy or style. He argues, “The leader ... takes others toward the object of their joint quest. That object defines the kind of leadership at issue. *Different types of leaders should be distinguished more by their goals than by the personality of the leader.*”<sup>5</sup>

So, to summarize, what are the most important, perhaps essential features of leadership highlighted by these definitions?

1. Leadership is about persuasion for the purpose of moving a group to action around a goal or goals members of the group and the leader share.
2. As part of that process, leadership may involve the provision of benefits or rewards to followers, though these may be psychological, social or moral as well as material, in exchange for the followers’ participation in pursuit of agreed upon goals.
3. The creation or identification of some shared goals is then an essential act or condition without which neither leadership, nor followership, are possible.
4. Finally, choices about the goals themselves and the means to pursue them often involve moral and well as practical questions, and the choices of goals may be crucial in determining what kind of leadership will be effective in particular contexts.

## § Connecting Spiritual Practice and Business Practice and Leadership

With this description of leadership in mind we can ask, “How might leadership be shaped or enhanced in different settings by various elements of spiritual practice and/or business practice?”

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<sup>4</sup> Garry Wills, *Certain Trumpets: The Nature of Leadership*, 1994, p.17.

<sup>5</sup> Wills, p. 19, Emphasis added.

Let me first note, as I pose this question I do *not* assume there is a clean dichotomy between “spiritual” practice and “business” practice – more simply, between what is spiritual and what is practical. That may sometimes be a useful typology, but it is surely not always a true typology.

Let me offer a slightly irreverent example. For many of us with training in management or economics thinking in terms of costs and benefits comes naturally. The phrase “return on investment” may just roll off our tongues. Yet few of us, I think, would try to analyze what the “return on investment” is for the time we spend in prayer. We would not do so because prayer is first and last a spiritual practice, surely not amenable to being evaluated in economic terms.

On the other hand, prayer is a spiritual practice with practical, often beneficial effects. There is actual research to confirm this. And I’d argue strongly on the basis of personal observation that there are leaders of “secular” organizations whose work as leaders in those settings is better – more effective – because they maintain a faithful personal discipline of prayer.

So here I want to lift up a distinctive and critical, if not uniquely Quaker assumption. *This is the conviction that the boundaries between the spiritual and the practical, between the religious and the secular, are highly permeable – and they should be. This has long been a core tenet of Quakerism.* Many traditional Quaker testimonies have roots in the view that all of life is holy, and so every relationship we are part of, and all the work we do, should be shaped by the core principles and insights of our faith. This, I believe, has critical implications for thinking about how we bring our spiritual values to our work, and how we put our practical skills to work in the service of our faith, because it assumes the melding of those elements of our lives is something to be embraced.

For example, consider James Walvin’s extraordinary study of the success of Quakers in business in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century England. It makes clear how essential these Friends’ religious values were in creating that success.<sup>6</sup> Their spiritual commitments to truthfulness in all their dealings made Friends among the most desirable partners in commerce. Their spiritual practices of “seeking truth” in all aspects of life seem to have led to a curiosity and openness to new learning that in turn led to their developing new ideas and processes in science and manufacturing. This, in turn, led to their developing and leading new industries. Their rigorous adherence to personal honesty contributed in a curious way to many of them founding banks in conjunction with other businesses they ran, because their customers asked them to care for their money.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Friends became leaders of commerce and industry in part because of the ways their spiritual values shaped their everyday behavior.

Now, before we conclude this integration of the spiritual with the practical is desirable just because it may lead to success in business, we should also note that many of these Quaker

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<sup>6</sup> James Walvin, *Quakers, Morals and Money*. 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Walvin, Chapter 4.

business leaders brought the organizational skills they honed in their professions to the religious and humanitarian causes and institutions through which they sought to serve those in need and change the world for the better. The success of these spiritual endeavors was enhanced by the institutional savvy Friends acquired “in the world.” Their business skills were put to work in the service of the Spirit to make their works of compassion and social transformation more effective.

This history has a lot to teach us about spiritual practice, business practice and leadership. To get to those lessons we need to look more closely at those different kinds of practices. So, let’s turn next to a discussion of “business” or “management practice.”

## § Business or Management Practice

There are many “practices” – meaning “things we do”; actions, habits or disciplines – that could be seen as part of the constellation of activities that constitute business or management practice. I want to propose a tentative list of the “core,” or at least very typical, *elements of management practice that we are likely to find in any organization – business, nonprofit or public agency – that we would think of as “well run” or “effective.”* My list includes the following:

1. A clear vision and definition of purpose, and of the goals for the organization’s work.
2. Ongoing efforts to engender and reinforce shared commitments to those goals among all organizational participants.
3. Thoughtful, continuing investigation and analysis of both the organization and the environment in which it exists to guide planning to accomplish those goals.
4. Openness to unexpected new learning or insights, including unwelcome insights, which are critical to making adaptations needed for the organization to be effective in pursuing its mission in a changing environment.
5. A commitment to apply lessons learned to achieve its goals and larger purpose.
6. Discipline in maintaining attention to *both* the original (or current) purpose and goals for the organization, *and* to the factors or influences that might lead to new opportunities for the fulfillment or extension of those purposes. (In other words, these organizations value both continuity and change.)
7. Sensitivity to the human, social and moral costs and benefits that result from the choices of goals and of the methods to pursue them, so that the organization (or movement) can be sustainable itself, and contribute to the welfare of the society by which it is sustained, as it seeks to accomplish its mission.

There is not time to draw out multiple examples to fill in this sketch. Some of these points may seem self-evident to anyone with a modest understanding of organizations and business. Still, there are organizations that seem to exemplify the whole set of principles in action. I think, for example, of the Herman Miller Company, the famous furniture manufacturer. Studies I’ve read

make it clear it has operated in the ways just described over its long and remarkable history. Operating in this manner it has a very long record of both generating a remarkable return-on-investment and being cited as one of the best companies to work for in the U.S. I would suggest that it is not insignificant the Herman Miller's leaders have seen their work as rooted in a clear set of spiritual values. (See the writings of Max DuPree.)

Many of you who are personally familiar with a much wider range of organizations than I am may have a set of exemplary organizations you know. Against those models you can consider whether these practices I've outlined are essential features of organizations you judge as effective. My hope is simply that this list offers a fair summary of the key features of management or business practice in effective organizations.

## § Spiritual Practice

Now, if a list of potential elements of "business practice" could be long, the same is true of a list of elements of "spiritual practice."

*The religious or spiritual elements of our lives are those where we become conscious of and give expression to that which is wondrous, ineffable, life giving, and the source of grace, love and meaning in our lives.* There are many, many things we might do to connect to that reality. A list could include traditional activities like prayer and meditation, study of sacred texts, participation in sacred music and so forth, which are often part of shared rituals. But individually many of us have other things we do, other ways we orient ourselves to the world, that serve similar purposes.

I know people for whom gardening is a spiritual practice. Someone I knew made a discipline of trying to do an act of kindness for a stranger every day. Giving time to distinctive kinds of reading – perhaps poetry – intended to open one to the experience of wonder and grace can be such a practice. The list could go on.

Again, we do not have the time to treat any of these in depth. But I want to propose here another list, this one of "core" spiritual practices that I think are central to the Quaker way of seeing and being in the world. These are things Friends have long done, ways of being and acting that are meant to help us be conscious of and give expression to the Divine Presence, for which we use many names in our tradition.

Central to the realm of spiritual practice in our Quaker tradition I believe are the following:

1. **Expectant waiting, also known as centering or contemplative prayer, and practiced collectively as meeting for worship.** — Quaker worship developed around the vivid conviction that God's presence can be known directly, that "Christ has come to teach his people himself," and the Holy will be known to those who still their own minds and

spirits and make themselves present to this experience. This is at the very heart of the Quaker experience. Historically, this is the spiritual practice in which Quakerism was first nurtured. It is also the basis for our practice of shared discernment.

2. **Self-examination and searching for Truth**, including objective as well as spiritual truth, are also central to our spiritual practice. — Early Friends’ commitment to examine themselves, their own souls, in the illumination of the Inner Light appears over and over again in their journals.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as they became involved in various humanitarian causes – for example, the anti-slavery movement – they took the work of learning the truth about what was going on in the world just as seriously. Finally they saw the Inner Light, the Light of Christ, as a gift meant to help them see deeper truths about themselves and the world in which they lived, and to see how to become better people.
3. **A deep personal integrity** in all aspects of life has always been seen as a fundamental Quaker virtue. — Such integrity may be a fruit of self-examination, and surely requires a discipline of that sort to be sustained. For many Friends over many years integrity went beyond simple honesty. It meant a refusal to “put on airs” of any sort, as well as making sure their “yea was yea and their nay was nay” (Jas. 5:12), and being so scrupulous in all aspects of their lives that they need not worry about their reputations should they come under the examination of others.
4. **A genuine sense of humility** has accompanied such integrity. — This does not need to be an exceptional modesty; does not mean one must be always self-effacing. Rather it is a kind of “groundedness” one sees in people who know and are able to own their weaknesses, and their potential frailties, as well as their strengths. This kind of humility makes one open to hearing others’ ideas and perspectives, because it sees that no one holds a monopoly on virtue or truth, and that inspiration may come through the humblest channels. It avoids vanity or arrogance because it knows that grace or chance can be as important an element as skill in most successful lives. Such humility yields compassion.
5. **Compassion has also been a key virtue of Quakerism** at its best. — Quakerism is not unique, but it is distinctive, in assuming that a sympathy for the conditions of others and a proclivity towards service will inevitably derive from true spiritual experience. Near to the heart and genius of our spirituality is the conviction, as William Penn eloquently put it, that “true godliness does not turn [people] out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavor to mend it.”

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<sup>8</sup> For a helpful, easily accessible study of the themes and materials commonly found in Quaker journals see, *Quaker Journals: Varieties of Religious Experience Among Friends*, by Howard Brinton, 1972.

## § Where Business Practice, Spiritual Practice and Leadership Intersect

I wanted to offer with these two lists, outlining key features of business or management practice on the one hand and Quaker spiritual practice on the other, so that we can ask two questions.

- (1) First, what elements, if any, are common features of both effective management practice and faithful spiritual practice? Are there parallels in the behaviors of faithful, spiritual people and effective organizations?
- (2) Second, where the features of business practice and spiritual practice intersect, where there are parallels, do they shed light on key features of, or resources for, more effective leadership?

I think there are common features and they do shed light. Let me describe some of those overlaps and insights. I will focus on three.

1. **A first overlap** I see involves **the business practice of defining purpose and the spiritual practice of expectant waiting or contemplation**. — The definitions of leadership we started with emphasized the centrality of shared goals. Effective organizations almost always begin with a clear sense of purpose or mission. Often that mission is something that felt like a vision to the founders; and these organizations often undertake periodic exercises to refresh and refine that sense of mission, that vision. They seek to keep a fresh clarity about who they want to be and what they want to achieve.

So, too, many people of faith have a sense of vocation around their lives, around their work and purpose in the world. And many return often to prayer or contemplation to gain or hone clarity in their identity and vocation. In both our spiritual and professional lives we need to engage in practices that strengthen the core values that shape our sense of purpose and clarify our view of the world. If we want to be leaders for change – and surely in these times we are very often leaders wrestling with change – this kind of grounding is invaluable.

One feature of Quaker spiritual practice that supports good leadership in every setting is the encouragement to pause for a moment, to be still, before acting habitually or narrowly out of one's own will. Taking time to breathe, to look both closely and broadly at a situation, and to remember one's own – or the organization's – purpose and aspirations before making a significant decision, is often crucial to making a good decision. This is good management practice, and all the more so in times of rapid and dramatic change.

Obviously there are times decisions must be made in a hurry, with little time for reflection. But both in our personal lives and in our organizations, the more we can build the habits of reflecting before we act – and again after we see results – the more we create occasions for learning that will make us better in our work, and make our work better for the world.

2. **A second overlap involves self-examination** — We know early Quakers believed the journey to personal and spiritual wholeness required ongoing self-examination. This is one value of contemplative prayer and of journaling. The exercise of looking honestly at one's own weaknesses as well as strengths, and seeking to do better (with the help of the Holy Spirit) has been a critical element in Quaker faith and practice.

Of course, effective organizations do something similar. Such organizations adopt practices of self-assessment of their products, services and processes, usually with frequent if not continuous feedback mechanisms, in order to determine where they are falling short of their own goals so that they can make improvements. They invite negative as well as positive feedback with the intent of making themselves better.

Can effective leaders do the same? Maybe the better question is “Can leaders be effective over the long haul without doing the same?”

Given the disparities of power and status that often exist between leaders and followers, it may be difficult for leaders to get honest and constructive feedback in an appropriate manner that allows them to see how to do better. In the business world, the growing use of executive coaches arises in part from recognizing that having a safe way to get this kind of feedback, and learn from it, can be enormously helpful to developing leaders. Where such resources are not available, some practices for self-examination developed in spiritual traditions over the years may be useful and adaptable for leaders of “secular” organizations as well.

In Quakerism we have had various mechanisms – elders and committees for clearness, for example – that we can use to garner others' views and advice about how to handle various situations in our personal and spiritual lives. Journal keeping is another practice designed to generate insights about how one is making progress – or not – in one's journey. Perhaps there are versions of these practices that can help leaders in all kinds of organizations.

3. **Integrity, both personal and professional, is a third key value of both business and spiritual practice at its best.** Again, Walvin's study of Friends in business highlights how the Quaker spiritual commitment to deep integrity was essential to shaping those business practices – fixed pricing, truth in advertising, fair treatment of workers, prudence in financial dealings – that led to their remarkable success. I know there are persons in this room who have had exemplary careers in business for whom this is a lynch pin of their professional and personal ethics.

I would suggest that such integrity, whether a matter of religious or professional ethics, is also essential to effective leadership. Why? Because this kind of integrity is the foundation of credibility, and credibility is essential for leaders. Effective leadership is virtually impossible where personal and professional credibility in the person(s) responsible for

leadership is weak or absent.<sup>9</sup> And this has to be especially true for leaders working in contexts where anxiety runs high because there is rapid change occurring – even more so where serious change is a goal of the work.

Moreover, this integrity has to go beyond simple honesty in these settings (crucial as that is) to encompass commitments to always try to do one's best work; to respect one's colleagues in the work; and to honor the mission and values of the organization one leads. So, here again a core Quaker value and practice is a foundation – I'd argue a necessary foundation – for effective leadership in virtually all organizational settings.

## § Turning to Leadership for Change

In the last section I began to raise the connections between these insights on leadership broadly and the theme of leadership for change. Let me now turn to that as my final focus.

To begin, I note that “leading for change” can have several meanings. Some people are trying to effect change in the organizations they lead so those organizations can do better work, whatever that work may be. Some people are leading organizations whose purposes are to create change, hopefully beneficial change, in the world. Whether we are attempting one or both of these kinds of leadership there are a few things we can count on in the process which the insights for leadership I've just laid out might be helpful in addressing.

First, if we want to provide leadership that will create beneficial change, then that leadership must in the end have roots in a positive vision of what can be. Sometimes starting a change process requires offering a true assessment of a bad situation, which may mean painting a bleak picture of how things are, or will be, if an organization does not change; or if the organization's work for change in the world does not succeed. But deep, lasting and positive change cannot be achieved or sustained by fear or despair. Rather it requires hope and an encouraging vision of what the future can be.

So we come back to questions of “faith” – of some sort or another – again. Leadership for change must be “inspired;” that is, shaped by a sense or spirit of positive potential to be effective and sustainable. There may be times when (to borrow a phrase) we need the “fear of God” to get us moving; but in the end it is only the love of God, or of our neighbors, or a vision of how things really can be better tomorrow that will keep us going in the hard, sometimes anxious work of creating beneficial change. This, I think, is a lesson of both sound spiritual practice and good management practice.

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<sup>9</sup> See, *Credibility: how leaders gain it and lose it, why people demand it*. James Kouzes & Barry Posner, Jossey-Bass, 1993. A whole stream of literature has followed from this work reinforcing the basic conclusions.

Second, leadership for change, whether it seeks change inside an organization or change in the world, will always meet resistance. Why? For several reasons: (1) Because most human beings prefer stability to change much (if not most) of the time. (2) Because there are always persons and powers invested in the status quo for whom change means giving up something they want to retain. (3) Because even when times are not good many people will prefer “the devil they know to the devil they don’t.”

Overcoming such resistance requires leaders for change to be able to show that the promise of the future sought is better than the reality likely to come to pass if change is not embraced. It may require showing how losses individuals may sustain will be more than made up for in the gains to the common good, to the welfare of the community as a whole, in which everyone can share. It often requires those who would be leaders for change to model the courage needed to face uncertainty, and to position themselves in ways that make clear they share in the risks and sacrifices they ask of others to make change possible. When leaders are persons of integrity, humility and compassion, as the convictions of our faith call us to be, those who work with or for them are much more likely to take the risks of change with them.

Third, except in the rarest of circumstances leadership for change that is positive and beneficial will *not* be marked by a wholesale abandonment of the present and past. Rather it will embrace and build upon what is demonstrably good, valuable and fruitful in the here and now, and in our traditions. Finding a way to carry forward and build upon what is positive and useful in the present, even while discarding or transforming what is unproductive or harmful to an organization, may be essential to making change possible and ultimately beneficial.

From my experience in the nonprofit world I must say that too often we see new leaders imposing change on existing organizations just to put their own stamp on the organizations, or to advance their own careers. This kind of change is often wasteful at best, and sometimes does serious damage to good institutions.

In contrast, there are many lessons to be learned from other organizations where new leaders saw their work was to change some things and preserve others to strengthen the institutions they took over. They worked carefully to help these organizations evolve as they needed to in new times and changing conditions, but with a focus on retaining what was of value as well as doing new things to sustain the mission and serve a larger good. Facilitating change in these situations may be among the most daunting challenges for leaders in times like ours.

The champions of the school of “adaptive leadership” argue that effective leaders must “engage people in distinguishing what is essential to preserve from their organization’s heritage from what is expendable. Successful adaptations [and leadership] are thus both conservative and

progressive.”<sup>10</sup> Helping an organization or movement evolve in ways that allow it to keep what is best in its work and culture as it discards what is no longer of value – and so become better able to fulfill its mission in new circumstances – that is the kind of leadership for change we need more of.

### § A Paradox for Leadership and Change

These last points reveal what may be a powerful paradox in the dynamics of leading for change, and I want to close with a story that highlights this paradox. This story suggests how a deep commitment to spiritual practice and insight can facilitate profound transformations for individuals and organizations by enabling leadership for change that takes root in reaffirming time honored ideals.

This is the story of Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council.<sup>11</sup> It is generally thought that Cardinal Roncalli, who became Pope John XXIII, was chosen in the belief that he would be a transitional figure who could be easily controlled by dominant forces in the Vatican, and thus would be little threat to the established order. The first assumption was somewhat true. John the XXIII reigned for only five years (1958-1963). The second assumption was entirely wrong.

John the XXIII was a traditionalist to his core. However, it turned out his ‘conservative’ theological views meant he took very seriously several key tenets of the faith that had long been neglected in Vatican circles; beliefs that the church should serve the world, that the leadership of the Church should seek guidance from the Holy Spirit, and that the bishops guided by the Holy Spirit should act collegially with one another, and even the people, in shaping the life of the Church. Acting on those beliefs, John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council hoping it would be an instrument of Divine inspiration to bring new life to the Church.

Those old enough to remember Vatican II know it was an extraordinary event with amazing consequences. Though there is no evidence that John sought radical change, he unleashed the forces of radical change in the Catholic Church because he held so strongly to the traditional belief that God will lead God’s people to what is new and good if they will be attentive and faithful. By calling the Council he created the occasion for that to happen. What an irony that a traditional leader engendered such remarkable change in such a conservative institution.

### § In Conclusion

What, finally, are the key points I propose for your consideration here?

First, that there are many places where the best elements of spiritual practice and management practice overlap, or at least reinforce one another.

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<sup>10</sup> Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 2009, P. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Wills, *Certain Trumpets*, 1994, pp. 133-145.

Second, these are places where we find important insights for how to practice the kind of leadership which can help organizations perform well in both practical and moral terms, serving their customers, stockholders, workers, members or citizens well, and contributing significantly to the welfare of the community as whole.

Third, as Friends we can look at a history of our people applying the values, practices and insights of our faith to their work in the world – in business and commerce as well as in spiritual and humanitarian endeavors – to bring change to and make a positive difference for the societies in which they lived. We can learn from their stories.

Fourth, perhaps the most important lesson to learn is that we serve ourselves and others well when we apply the best principles of our faith to our work in the world; and apply what we know about how to make organizations more effective to our Quaker endeavors. This may be the key to our creating change for the better in our world.

Finally, as the story of John XXIII reminds us, *our God is a God of surprises*. When we are trying to do good in the world – in any form – it may sometimes be a Providential accident rather than the clever result of our careful planning that opens the door to some wonderful outcome. So sometimes it may be how we accept and adapt to the unexpected, to the change we did not anticipate, that makes the best things possible.

So here is the paradox again: The best leaders are sometimes those who are simply the first to follow when the Spirit begins to lead, and are willing to follow even when it is taking them someplace unexpected. I'd argue that has often been the experience of Friends; and it suggests a model for leadership with spiritual and practical elements I think we will do well to emulate, especially in these times of change.

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