



Transcriptions

Flounders, Fleas, and Kingfishers

Ted Ward

Annotation: *Columbus, OH, November, 1986. Audience Unknown.* Ted Ward describes various schools of thought with regard to leadership and identifies a number of his concerns about the practice of leadership in the church.



Welcome and greetings. The word, dynamic, has been used four times already. I'll use it once more, and we'll have a dynamic time together. As a matter of fact, that was the idea behind the title for this presentation. Some of you presumed that this was a misprint. That perhaps this was a title arranged for a group of biologists or something of the sort but, as a matter of fact, it is a misprint. There are three letters left out and I will tell you what they are. The title is Flounders, Fleas, and Kingfishers (e-r-s) in medieval moralizing on leadership. I assumed that if a group of Christians got together for a day-and-a-half or two days on the subject of dynamic leadership in Christian education that we ought to start right off naming some of the clichés, attacking some of the shibboleths, trying to nail down some of the stereotypes so we can at least get it on and get going.

As a matter of fact, I want to talk this afternoon about three symptoms and one profound ailment. Now the three symptoms are, as you guessed, the three creatures named in our medieval moralizing. But I'm quite commonly in the business of talking with analogies and metaphors, parables, trying to find ways to make ideas manageable so that people can handle them. And I know that our Lord was pretty good at this and I have never made any great secret of the fact that there are many things about our Lord that I would like to be very much like and one of them is I would

like to be as quick, clever, and thorough with parables and metaphors and illustrations as he was. I tell many of my students—yes, even at the doctoral level—that the missing skill for many a person in the field of Christian education is the capacity to tell a story in an interesting way. And I think part of the capacity to tell a story in an interesting way grows out of this awareness that almost everything in life is a parallel with something else in life, either in terms of contrasts or in terms of illustrations or in terms of more memorable ways to see things. And what I thought we might do this afternoon is just kind of lay to the side three of the rather besetting symptomatic problems that we run into over and over and over again in leadership within the church, and then maybe we can focus more precisely on the underlying ailment and then we'll be in a mood to really look for solutions in the next two days.

The flounder to a person who has this medieval gift of—look it up in the dictionary—bestiary, b-e-s-t-i-a-r-y, which was a literary style in the Middle Ages in which all the attributes of a given creature were studied to see what those attributes could tell us about human beings. By the way, it was out of that tradition that grew such things as Richard the Lionhearted who, as a matter of fact, did not have a heart transplanted from a lion no matter what kids today may think. By the way, you have a harder time with symbolism like Richard the lionhearted considering what kids get on television and news today. You also get things like are still memorialized in Wall Street. You are familiar with the bulls and the bears, the bull market and the bear market. That comes out of a very old notion about how forces work among human beings in the trading market.

Bestiary is rarely used today in the name of the church and I thought maybe we could remedy that today and talk about flounders, fleas, and kingfishers, three types of church leaders. Now if you take a hard look at the bestiary of these creatures you will discover that there are some parallels that are perhaps a little too bluntly obvious. I don't know whether you're familiar with the various fish that fly under this general name flounders. It's a categorical name, including such fish as the sole, and so forth. They all have a couple of things in common: they all lie on the bottom. They all lie on the bottom, and they don't move around an awful lot except occasionally to open their mouths to try to take something in. They're described by ecologists as changeable. I even pulled this phrase out, changeable, to blend with the background. Next phrase in that particular book was also known as flukes and I thought to myself instantly about any number of my friends and fellows who I suspect we would have to call flounders, flukes, changeable to blend in with the background, flabby, lying on the bottom, quite often with both eyes on the same side. Now if that isn't a stereotypic beginning, I don't know what is.

But, you know, one of the things that's wrong with us today and a lot of churches is that we've tried democracy, but we've tried democracy in such a flabby way that leadership behavior has gone to the bottom; just lies there and waits for people to come along, and push and pull with the current, and then claims anything good that comes out of it as having been illustrative of what the leadership was all about.

There's another misguided form in our misapplications of democratic values within the church and I refer to our other of the first two creatures: the flea. Now you are perhaps familiar with the flea in terms of its being a rather jumpy creature, very reactive. It has a characteristic of hopping around never quite sure where it will land. Now I would not want to start naming names, but I have spotted that leadership behavior in the church: essentially reactive, quite often hopping around never quite settling down on anything. And interestingly, though, that is quite in sharp contrast with the flounder. I think it grows out of the same misunderstanding; the misunderstanding that somehow

the role of leadership is to wait for the tides and the pressures and the circumstances of life to kind of wash over and come pressing, and then either hop somewhere else or lie on the bottom.

It's quite obvious that what we need for dynamic leadership in the church is quite the opposite of either a flounder or a flea, but for very different reasons. We have to talk in terms of people who have some idea where their backbone is, how to use it, how to swim against the current, and to get up off the bottom, and to get one eye on each side so they get a perspective. And that's not a flounder. But then we need people who know how to dig in, hold tight, and quit hopping around. One of the problems that I run into very frequently, described to me quite often in consultation is, we tried this and, you know, it didn't seem to work out so we tried this, and we tried that for a while, it didn't seem to work so we tried this. And I get a picture of a flea hopping from this to that without any degree of persistence; without any willingness to tie down and see what can be made of what might be a very good idea if anybody held on long enough to give it a thorough test.

But I suspect, for every flounder and for every flea, we've got at least two kingfishers. Now I was raised in the swamps of Florida and one of the things you learn is to watch the behavior of birds. Birds are very, very intriguing, especially birds that feed in the edges of lakes and streams. And I learned to identify the kingfisher: always with a rather regal look; always perched rather well above everything else that was going on. Always ready to swoop, trying to manage from on high, and occasionally digging in and going back to the perch and singing about it. You know, our Lord in Matthew 20 had an encounter with the mother of the mortified brothers. The mortified brothers were an early rock group, but you remember what caused the mortified brothers and that was their mother, Zebedee's wife, who had this brilliant idea that she brought to Jesus and that was what created instantly the mortified brothers. And the crux of the problem was that in a very natural motherly, we might even say responsible and predictable way, this lady saw honor and responsibility appropriate for her sons representing something of an achievement of status. And she sought that Jesus would make one of these boys sit on his right and the other on his left, and Jesus says: Dear lady, you've got the wrong value system. And a third of our medieval bestiary today is concerned with the kind of leadership that has the wrong value system: the value system of the kingfisher always sitting above it, ready to swoop in, but always returning to the high perch and ruling the system from above. Now how about that for a stereotype? You could have counted on that one. I mean, you didn't even need to come here today to guess what that one was going to be about.

But I see all three of these as more symptoms than ends, and I would like to go on beyond these and suggest that Jesus was trying to make a very important point to Zebedee's wife when he said, "It shall not be so among you. He who would be ruler over will be the servant." We have a model of leadership in the church that has to take its source, not just from the pragmatics of how leadership works in a society such as ours—and, indeed, not simply by adapting the value system of a dominant society wherein we have a kind of glorification of the processes of democracy—but, instead, a model of leadership for the church must take its values from the kingdom of heaven and yet must make this extremely practical, extremely workable so it is not simply some kind of pie in the sky model. Now you'll have to understand where I'm coming from. Kathy gave you a hint or two or three, but it actually gets worse than that. I'm a Christian who, in the providence of God, is a social scientist and I have the irony of being a social scientist in a theological seminary. And I'm not sure, medieval or otherwise, what that's an analogy of. I think bull in the china shop comes close.

But I have to look at a thing like leadership from a research point of view and ask myself, what can we know about leadership from an analysis of the processes in society that we call leading and leadership? And I am not here this afternoon to give you good news. I'm here to bring you bad news because, as a matter of fact, though the idea of leadership in human groups has been one of the most extensively pursued of all themes in social science since the emergence of research-based social science early in this century—as a matter of fact, the research on leadership adds up very close to zero—not for lack of effort, not for lack of investment. But there is something ideologically, conceptually flawed in the way we have been looking for and about leadership and I thought, with that blue note, we'd get off to a flying start this afternoon. So I thought it would be well for us to take a look at why this is the case and see if there are some clues about what I'm calling a persistent and serious ailment profoundly affecting the church. If we look back over the history of research on leadership in the 20th century, we will discover, according to some analysts, four phases, and, according to other analysts, three phases. I'll dismiss the first of these possible four and then get on with the major three. For those of you who are interested in doing some careful reading on this, the key name is [Ralph] Stogdill, S-t-o-g-d-i-l-l, Stogdill, whose books and articles are available in almost any decent library. And his work is being carried on now by a colleague whose name is Bass¹ who now is the editor and perpetuator of the Stogdill, *Handbook of Leadership*, Bass, B-a-s-s, which also happens to be a fish; not included in my bestiary, nor is Stogdill because I couldn't find it.

Apparently, the earliest way of looking at leadership in this century, when the emergence of social science has given us orderly ways to study human processes, is to presume that the thing to look at is the effects of leadership. What is it that leadership does in the way of impact on social groups? And so we have, early in the century, a kind of power and influence approach. What are the powers? What are the influences? And a whole school of thought has come out of that which has given rise to a lot of the stuff that is still being promoted today as if it were brand new in the area of marketing, and a lot of material about power and influence and the persuasions of life. But I rather dismiss this because it hasn't proved to be a very solid thread. The solid threads in research begin with presuming that what was important in leadership was traits. And fairly early in the century, people were running around trying to identify leaders and asking themselves the question, if this is a leader, what traits does he have? So we found, for example, persistence. We found visionary, the capacity to build large schemes. We found firmness. We found clarity of communication. We found definition of decision-making, and many, many other traits of this sort. As a matter of fact, that trait research went on for a long, long time and somebody probably went to college taught by a professor who was still living in the traits era although, as a matter of fact, there aren't many of us here old enough for that to have been the case unless you went to rather a poor school. Because, as a matter of fact, by the time that most of us were in school, we were being taught by people out of a second generation—the behavior's school of thought. And about the time of World War II, we had the emergence of the notion that the way you study a thing like leadership is to study the behaviors of leaders. So you find what it is that leaders do and you, then, are in a position to pass on to others through training, through supervision, and make sure that they are behaving that way—the way of leading.

The third of the great schools of thought emerged about fifteen years ago just after 1970 and it is sometimes called the situational or contextual school. And what it acknowledges is that

¹ Bernard Bass. *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research & Managerial Applications*, 3rd Edition. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990

² Henry Mintzberg, H. The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact. *Harvard Business Review*, 53, 4 (July-August

leadership is not the same traits in every situation, nor is it the same behaviors in every situation. What is leading effectively in one situation may be not effective leading at all in another situation. Much of the earlier works and in traits and behaviors was set to rest as being rather archaic and rather simple-minded. The only problem is that this elegant contextual or situational view opens the door to infinite variability and when we get done thinking that through, we realize that there's really nothing at all that you can pin down and say leadership is always this, or leadership is always that. Even, for example, we can go contextual and talk about the servant who leads effectively by shaking the master abruptly and saying, get out of here! You say, well, a servant could get himself in real trouble behaving like that. Not if the building is on fire. The context makes one whale of a lot of difference. Once recognizing that, however, you come to the end, I believe, of a road of attempts to understand what ultimately may not be understandable and that is what ties together this set of characteristics that we call leadership. And then we have the courage to call a conference in Columbus, Ohio, and talk about dynamic leadership. I'm here to tell you that the research world is not sure what leadership is, to say nothing of having no idea at all what dynamic leadership is. In other words, whenever social scientists are at their humble best in respect to certain areas of inquiry into human behavior, we have to throw our hands up and say, we've tried a lot of angles. We've looked at it a lot of ways and where we are today makes us wonder if we're not dealing with a mystery.

Now some of the outcomes of research along the line have been very useful. They are useful to think with and they provide us a useful framework to conceptualize. For example, I am deeply in love with Mintzberg's ten roles published in 1975,² a date after which—well, a date at which this should have been recognized as being our kick but, still, it has quality. Mintzberg suggests that leadership involves ten role functions. Now you listen to them and they sound great:

- Leadership involves being a competent, respectable figurehead.
- Second: A leader in the dynamic sense of going out there ahead of people.
- Three: A liaison, a bridge-builder, a linker as we call today networker.
- A monitor in the sense of supervisory management control.
- A disseminator in terms of being outward-oriented in communication patterns.
- A spokesperson in terms of clarity.
- An entrepreneur in terms of being able to pull pieces and parts together and put them together in new configurations and make them fly.
- A disturbance handler. Now everybody knows what this is and if you don't have something of *that*, you're not going to get to first base in an actual leadership responsibility.
- A resource allocator.
- And last, a negotiator.

² Henry Mintzberg, H. The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact. *Harvard Business Review*, 53, 4 (July-August 1975), 49–61. For one of many links to Henry Mintzberg's managerial roles see www.mindtools.com/pages/article/management-roles.htm

Sounds good and probably is a good model for us to use to reason with. However, if I go and take those ten and put them against people that I would identify as leaders in the Scripture, I run into some curiosities.

Now I look at Abraham and say, well, there's a beautiful example of a figurehead. He was a leader alright and he became a kind of a permanent figurehead for God's people, and it's still true today. So far, so good. Then we look at Moses and say, there's a good example of a leader in the sense of getting out front so the people will follow him I could think of several people who fulfill liaison role. Then I come down to monitor and I come into Samuel and I say, well, you know, if Samuel was a leader, he was a leader despite the fact that he was a poor monitor. A disseminator, and I look at Noah and I say, well, if he was a leader he sure didn't do a very good job of disseminating over all those years that he was building this monstrosity on the side of the hill. If I look at spokesperson, I remember very well that Moses at the burning bush presumed that that's what God really needed, therefore, he said, take somebody else. When I look at entrepreneur, a person who knows how to put little things together to come out with grand schemes, I say, that's the opposite of Gideon. God had to show him that he didn't have to have all the resources in the world to get on with it. Very opposite of an entrepreneur. Disturbance handler, and I come to a marvelous character in the New Testament by the name of Simon Peter and say, my goodness. And then I go to resource allocator, and I remember our friend, Samson—not a very good resource allocator. And I wonder, really, if this really is a picture of anything that is exemplary of what God is doing through people.

Now I can also take another tack. I can take a shorter list like the Hersey and Blanchard list in 1977 because they reduced things to a nice minimum.³ They say, really what we're involved in is three things: task behavior, relationship behavior, and maturity. Now jot that down. That's not bad; that's not bad. You go home and say, I got to work on those things. Task behavior: I got to really be doing a job that's clear, defined, and gets done. Second, I've got to be concerned about my relationship behavior. How I relate to those over me, under me, and beside me in the system. Crucial. And third, I need maturity. How are you going to get that? Well, you're going to have to wait, or remember. But Hersey and Blanchard break that into two parts and they say, well, there's a job maturity where you mature in a job, and there's also a psychological maturity where you mature in terms of your perceptions of yourself.

But, folks, I'll have to tell you that for all of the quality of these models there's not a one of these, including the two good ones I've just shared with you that actually stands very long in the face of the criticisms made by other social scientists. Everybody takes everybody else's models apart because there really are no defensible, overall, general models of leadership. Now I'm saying that with a great deal of confidence. There just aren't any. And just as soon as one gets built, within two years it's been torn down by others trying to test the model to see if it really holds up. This is a real problem because it's obvious that people do lead. It is obvious that each of us in this room have a leadership, leading, some kind of a role responsibility, and we say, I want to do it effectively. Can I get some help from that source in social science? And I have to be honest with you; the answer is, probably not.

³ Now in 10th edition. Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources*, 10th Edition. Pearson, 2012

Now, as a matter of fact, there are some people who are consulting in this field who kind of do a helpful thing for us because they at least sharpen the issues. Some of you know of Peter Drucker. Peter Drucker has had a very remarkable impact on American management philosophy because he is a management philosopher, and the values that he carries with him are very much more Christian than are typical of the American marketplace. One of the reasons that people respect Peter Drucker is that he has this capacity to look at the moral issue that lies below the pragmatic issue. And he is constantly driving people to look deeper at the relationship issues, at the treatment of people, and some of these other things.

I'll never forget a time in a conference in the West coast when one of these large combines of Christian organizations doing Christian management conferences thought they were going to have the big super conference. And they had all the people from all kinds of walks of life in Christian management coming together and giving their spiel and it was several days long. And they had Peter Drucker in and he was going to be the kind of showman who would help the Christians see where the action really was. The only problem was that some of the people at this conference weren't very good listeners. This is quite commonly true of leadership people. And, consequently, they were all there telling their story and not paying much attention to anybody else. And my responsibility was to lead a whole morning of critical discussion, after all the rest of the papers and presentations had been made, on the final morning. So what did I do? Well, knowing something of the frame of reference, I just went in there and jotted down verbatim and used my tape recorder to pick up quotations from all sorts of people; almost all of them Christians in the area of management with the exception of Peter Drucker who makes no specific Christian proclamation. But I picked up Peter's stuff, too. And then I took these choice quotations and scrambled them together and I gave a test. Some of these statements were made by Christians at this conference; some of them were made by non-Christians at this conference and I gave them a set of fifty. As a matter of fact, 25 Peter Drucker and 25 theirs. Peter Drucker's statements were identified by that group as having been more Christian than their own statements. And they were right because within the Christian Management Association types, there's an awful dose of plain old red-and-white-and-blue American success syndrome, winner-take-all elitism. I tell you.

At any rate, Peter Drucker's great contribution—and I think this is the key to understanding what his contribution has been—is to differentiate efficiency and effectiveness. And maybe you've heard this before. It's almost become something that you repeat cliché: effectiveness and efficiency. And he starts out by saying, the biggest problem we've got in America is that Americans are efficiency-oriented to a fault. And we keep asking the question, how can we make things more efficient? As a matter of fact, if you look at the leadership research itself in the 20th century that seems to be the major motive—how to make leadership more efficient; which means getting things done. Peter Drucker says there's something that has to go along with that and that is effectiveness. Let me give it to you this way, he says. And he uses words and you'll hear the couplets and you'll see the comparison. Efficiency is the art of doing things right. Effectiveness is the art of doing the right things. Are all of you in favor of doing things right? Yes, of course. We're all in favor of doing things right. But then he stops and says, there's something more important than that—it is effectiveness. Effectiveness is the art of doing the right things. Hear the difference? Doing things right; doing the right things. Things right; right things. So then he raises the question, are we all in favor of doing the right things? And everybody says yes, let's do the right things. And he says, that's the issue. We've got to keep that focus so that we don't let our efficiency values overwhelm our effectiveness values. Yes, Peter Drucker, you are right. Effectiveness can be eclipsed by efficiency in this society.

But far more important in the church of Jesus Christ and *its* organizations is the issue of leading in a way that is Christian. And that's what I want to share with you today as the profound ailment. Far beyond the fleas, the flounders, and the kingfishers is the issue of leading in a Christian way. I think the failure to define leadership Christianly is one of our most profound issues.

Let me give you six complaints—if the shoe fits, wear them, or it, as the case may be—my own list of complaints about what happens in leadership. First, what I call Pragmatic Problem A. Pragmatic problem A, I list at the top of my list—ends justify means. It's an old one. Philosophers have been wrestling with it for a long, long time. It's the key pragmatic problem and the presumption that if you're doing it in a right cause, it's right. I am currently negotiating on behalf of several people because I find myself quite often in the role of a mediator between people and their organizations. I am sought out for that kind of a role. God help the people who seek me out because it's usually a last desperation attempt. There are organizations that fly under the name of Christian that so seriously mangle people that people scream out for help from any place they can get it. Quite often as you probe and probe and probe, you find that the issue is that the organization is doing things that are not even legal in the United States. But they're doing them because they're doing it for the cause of Christ, therefore, legality notwithstanding. For example, we're in current negotiation on one such issue over a telephone call that was recorded totally against federal regulations on recording. And the Christian organization is taking the attitude: well, a Christian shouldn't have anything to hide. Therefore it's okay for them, as a matter of routine on all incoming phone calls, they tape record everything. Totally illegal.

My second concern: mishandling of people—closely related, closely related—but the downright crass way in which people mishandle each other; hurting people in the name of helping people. If I ever hear the phrase again, but it's for his own good, I think I'm going to scream. I'm so tired of people telling me about vicious things that they do that are for the good of other people. You say, does that really happen? Well, don't be naïve. It's probably happened within your experience, too. We don't so readily talk about these things because we find ourselves too often exposed to a kind of outer-world concern that says well, we don't dare let people know that we have problems inside the church. It would harm their faith. Let me tell you what harms people's faith even more, folks—hiding truth. Our God is a God of truth. He is in a position to honor truth. Never shy from truth because you are afraid that it would work against the gospel of Jesus Christ. No way.

Third: manipulation. What is manipulation? Been a lot of discussion about it for 15, 20 years now. It's been a hot topic. I don't want to take it apart this afternoon to see what makes it tick but, basically, it comes down to this: anytime *my* notion of what God wants *you* to do is more important than *your* notion of what God wants you to do, then I'm manipulating you. Just try that one on for size. Because usually when we, as Christians, manipulate in the name of Christian leading or leadership, we manipulate in that area. But God wants to have you do that, Fred. But God needs you there, Susie. Sure. Anytime I put *my* view of what God wants *you* to do ahead of *your* view of what God wants you to do, I'm in the position of manipulating you and that gets vicious in a hurry.

Fourth: too much confidence in organizational structures. One of the besetting problems in organized Christianity, church and particularly parachurch. is the tendency to use organizational strategies to solve all kinds of problems. There are certain parachurch organizations that would come right to the tip of our tongues and we would all know what we're talking about; organizations in the spotlight today that have a kind of a knee-jerk reaction. Anytime anything goes wrong in any

of their work, they reorganize top to bottom. They have everybody sit in a different chair. It's like a musical chair game and then whoever's standing up when the music stops, they have them go out. Before anybody can get used to the new seating plan, the music starts again. Too much confidence in organization.

Fifth: idolatry of success. And this I call Pragmatic Problem B. Pragmatic A was ends justify means, at the beginning of your list. Pragmatic Problem B is fifth and, by the way, these do exist in my frame of reference in a kind of a depth of gravity issue list. As I go down my list, they get more and more profound. There is an idolatry of success, itself, that I find today ruling in many of our reasonings as organizational people. God expects us to be successful. I say that's a strange bit of news to any number of people in the Word of God who found themselves gloriously unsuccessful except in one narrow term and that was that they were where God told them to be, doing what God told them to do.

And the last on my list, which is the most grave of all, is a paganizing of prayer—inviting God to bless our clever schemes. And if that's not paganizing prayer I'd like to know what is. I have witnessed prayer of that sort as a concluding act in absolutely awful planning meetings in organizations of the church and it grieves me every time I witness it. Clever people put together clever schemes and then bring God in as a last step and say, hey, God we've got a great idea for you and if you'll get on line and get in, too, we'll be glad to run you down the . . . And I wonder sometimes. I wonder. Sometimes even our own creativity becomes an idolatry in exactly that model.

No, I don't think Drucker's right. I don't think it's just the issue of efficiency and effectiveness. I think it's the issue—one more step Mr. Drucker; not just “efficiency is the art of doing things rights and effectiveness is the art of doing the right things”. For a Christian, there's a third factor: defining right, righteously. Right does not define itself, even when Peter Drucker does it. In fact, the more I probe and the more I reflect on what we haven't been able to pin down, going these sorts of directions to inquire into leadership, the more I wonder if maybe the leadership emphasis, itself, may be partly at fault. Now, are you ready for this? You may think so, but I doubt it. And I don't intend to destroy your conference, so you'll have to stick with me at least four or five minutes so I can bail out after pulling the plug out of the big tub we're sitting in.

Maybe there is no such thing as leadership. Maybe there is no such thing as leadership. And I'm not just trying for some kind of a clever effect. Seriously. Those of you who have a background in social science, particularly in anthropology or linguistics, are probably familiar with a construct called the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis. Now two scientists by the name of Sapir (S-a-p-i-r) and Whorf (W-h-o-r-f) got together in the '50's and put together some research data that was available in the area of linguistics that we had long understood, but hadn't really thought of its ramifications; and put together a hypothesis that reads a little like this: language controls your view of the world. Now it's obvious that your view of the world controls language. You create language for the experiences that you encounter, and language emerges after people discover things. For example, you find a tip-of-the-tongue use today of atomic energy. Well, when I was a kid growing up, atomic energy was a phrase you didn't use because you didn't need it. Now the scientists had it, but we didn't need it. And what happened was that once we had it, then we had language for it and now we can talk about it. Even President Eisenhower at that time, though he couldn't pronounce it, he talked about 'nuclear' energy . . .

Now, as a matter of fact, the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis says, let's turn that around; go the other way. Once you have, in a language, certain kinds of linguistic constructs, you tend to see your world in terms of the presence or absence of those constructs. How many times does the word leadership appear in the Bible? Anybody want to hazard a guess? Somebody says, none. That's a brave response by a person who doesn't own an NIV. The NIV concordance will give you four: Numbers 33:1, Psalm 109:8, and then the quotation of Psalm 109:8 in Acts 1:20, at least they're consistent, and Romans 12:8. But interestingly, the word is a throwaway word in each case, because in Numbers 33 it is simply a taking of the figural hand of Moses and making it leadership of Moses which doesn't even go with the poetry of that thing so we have to regard that as a kind of a strange translation. The Psalm 109 is translated in almost every other translation, office and it becomes leadership there and in Acts 1:20. And in Romans 12:8 the idea which NIV translates *leadership* is everywhere else translated *leading*.

Now when I said, maybe there's no such thing as *leadership*, I didn't say, there's no such thing as *lead* and *leading*. Now don't overreact, okay? When we use the word *leadership*, we're talking purely 20th century English. Now what am I driving at? I'm driving at the very distinct possibility that the word leadership tends to make us go off on a search for the end of the rainbow which tends to be not only a moving target, but made out of vapor. God uses remarkably different ways to get people to lead his people. True or False? *True*. Absolutely true, and that's one of the most dazzling things you can come across by the study of characters of the Scripture who lead. In fact, I've had this challenge out, you know, name ten leaders. What did they have in common? The answer usually comes back, they're Jewish. And believe me, from a training point of view, there's not an awful lot you can do with that.

[Does] God lead? Yes. Does God use people to lead? Yes. Leading, lead, any other form of verb. Fine and dandy. Let's get with it. But when we start making nouns out of it, what happens? It tends to become thing. See it? It tends to become thing and then we begin to say, it's like a basket. What goes in the basket? So we look for the traits that go in the basket. We look in the behaviors that go in the basket. Then we look for the situational contexts that go in the basket, and pretty soon we look in our basket and find out it's got a hole in the bottom because there is no basket to put a common core of this stuff into.

Take a look at the commonality and dissimilarity of the characters given to us in Hebrews 11, the faith list: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Moses' parents, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. What do they have in common? They're Jewish. Did they all lead in the same way? No. You say, well, they weren't all leaders. That's not why they're listed there. They're listed as people of faith. Alright, you take me to your favorite chapter. Where do you find the leadership list? That's funny, how come the Bible doesn't have a leadership list? How come we don't find people identified for their great *leadership* quality in some kind of a list comparable to their *faith* quality? Why, indeed. Because Hebrews 11 is the issue. It is the faith component that is at stake. There is no other single factor. The issue is a common denominator of faith that defines a person's relationship to God enabling God to lead through that person. You say well, my goodness. I was afraid this would turn into a Sunday school lesson. Well, I'm sorry, folks, but that's really where it all comes back to. Now does that stop me from examining what is going on when people are leading? No way. In fact, we're encouraging our doctoral students to make this one of the key threads of research that are in the emerging research programs at Trinity. We are very concerned that we know what goes on in what we're calling where the rubber meets the road where the person who has been trained to be God's functionary in the

church is actually working with the people of God. We're very interested in the nature of that transaction. But I'm trying to avoid, in my mind and even in our student's mind, the presumption that that stuff is called by some common name such as leadership.

Now, please, I don't want to spoil your whole weekend. It isn't even here, yet. So, from now on, don't be slavishly avoiding the use of the word leadership. I'm having enough trouble with it and I've been working on it for two years. Because I'm conducting a little Whorf-Sapir hypothesis in my own vocabulary. Do I begin to see the phenomenon differently when I drop the word deliberately? And the answer is, yes, I do. That's one reason why this afternoon, and the first time this afternoon, that I've been willing to share with a group what I'm actually trying to do with this in my own vocabulary. I'm trying to conceptualize *leading* and *to lead* and being a *leader* and leading in God's leading, rather than anything associated with the word, which I think to be a 20th century noun basket, called leadership, and it does make a difference. For one thing, it opens my eyes to a passage such as 2 Peter 1:3: "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness, through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

This is the dramatic beginning point for that absolutely marvelous list of qualities and characteristics. Note it begins with the sovereignty of God. We have been touched, even in our resistance; in our rebellion against God, we have been touched by his own glory and goodness. Therefore, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; to your goodness, knowledge—And knowledge, in the epistemology of the Hebrew frame of thought, is not simply up here. Knowledge is that which you act out in life—and self-control. It leads from self-control into perseverance, from perseverance into godliness, to godliness into the brotherly love that comes of family identification with the people of God, and then outwardly add to your brotherly kindness, love in the larger sense.

There it is: faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. And if there is anything about the qualities of defining right, righteously, it would be out of that kind of teaching of the Word. Now then, how do we behave as leaders in church? Do we behave out of love, brotherly kindness, godliness, perseverance, self-control, knowledge, goodness, and faith; or do we fall short because that's the measuring stick? For, if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and inefficient. Do you know what I just read to you? I read you the eighth verse out of that same section of 2 Peter, [chapter 1]. Let me read it again. It just pops out: For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and inefficient. Thank you, Peter Drucker. Now you say well, I can't find inefficient in my Bible. Interestingly, inefficient is also a 20th century word. Try the 17th century word unproductive because that's what it probably says in your Bible. What is unproductive, but inefficient? Right? There it is.

Key to the process is described for us in the last verse of 1st Samuel 3 and the first verse of the next chapter; 1st Samuel, last of 3 beginning of 4. Here it is: "The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his Word. And Samuel's word came to all Israel." Ah! There's a man leading for God. Read it again, the last verse of 1st Samuel 3 into the first verse of 4. Terrible example of breaking chapters: "The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his Word. And Samuel's word came to all Israel." What was it to lead? In Samuel's case, to help all Israel hear God. Try this for a leader's prayer,

Dear Lord, show me where you're going. Give me grace and strength to follow.
And allow me, please, to help others as they, too, follow you. Amen.