

Is This the Way It Should Be?

Author: Colin Buckland

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Is this the way it should be? A major emphasis on excellent leadership around the world appears to have a lot to do with things like strength of personality, skills of oration, confidence in decisions, single mindedness and perhaps most common of all a compelling sense of direction that people can follow. It seems as if leadership is equated more with the appearance of confidence and outward displays of power than with character. My understanding of scripture and in particular, the leadership style of Jesus, suggests to me that he is more interested in character than in the outward displays of power.

One of the human responses to Jesus was to crowd him, follow him around to see what would happen next or what he would do to benefit them. This wasn't a commitment to follow him as disciples so much as to look to him as a leader to meet their needs. Human beings in their brokenness and fallenness appear to want to draw their confidence and security from seemingly stronger people rather than from personal growth. There is a tendency then, in my view, to align with methods of leadership that award to a leader superhuman and somewhat godlike attributes in the hope that the said leader will deliver for me, provide me with what I need, give me a sense of security, perhaps even provide a level of humanity to aspire to that gives me a sense of all being well with my world.

So, I am suggesting that there is a circular dynamic between the stance of leadership and the needs of human beings that collude to propagate a type of leadership that has been in existence for hundreds of years. I am suggesting that any attempt to restate the attributes of biblical, Jesus like leadership, is met with suspicion and fear possibly also anger and aggression. It can be seen as an attempt to undermine the status quo. If this is true then it indicates the possibility that long-time held positions remain unquestioned and could keep damaged systems in place that need adjusting. In my view it is healthy to take prevailing views about leadership into consideration and evaluate them.

This is an initial blog from me and I am aware that I begin with a question mark being placed over traditional understandings of leadership in the church. This is not aimed at simply being critical but to help in driving the agenda for excellent leadership that is desperately needed in the church world-wide.