Faith in Leadership
How Leaders Live out Their Faith in Their Work and Why It Matters
Robert Banks and Kimberly Powell, editors

Part 1: Resurgent Virtues for Faith-Based Leadership

Forward, Preface, **Chapter 1 – Moving from Faith to Faithfulness**

Questions for Reflection – *answer only those which "grab you."*

1. What is something within the reading assignment which particularly speaks to me right now (an insight, a challenge, a reminder, an "aha" moment)?

2. How do I view the relationship between these two seemingly different yearnings in our society: the call for leadership and the search for faith?

    - How is my own growth in faith currently impacting the way I lead others?

    - How is my leading others influencing my perspective on faith, my experience of faith?

3. How do I view the right balance between expressing our truest selves in our workplaces, as people of faith, and being sensitive to those who are not so oriented?

4. Have I ever experienced within myself or in any of my work environments a disconnection between faith as an act of belief in someone (especially God) and faithfulness, the practice of being true to one's highest ideals, of following through on commitments? If so, what do I believe are the primary reasons for this disconnection?

5. Robert Banks in chapter 1 states that people today tend to think of faith as primarily a personal, private matter drawing a firm boundary between their work and their religious commitments. He continues -- *"This shift has left the legacy of mostly silent believers, who no longer talk about their faith in public settings. They may occasionally talk about their values, but mostly with no reference to the basis of these values in a religious worldview."* Have I experienced this reality in my own life? Do I believe it is an issue of concern? Why or why not?

6. Banks comments that *people's sense of work has shifted from following a call or vocation to pursuing a career. Work becomes a personal expression more than a divine commission, an arena for individual fulfillment more than for social transformation.* Do I view this as a concern? Has this in any way weakened the connection between my faith and my work? If so, how?

7. Banks states that *there is a growing preoccupation with financial gain and tangible results dominating everything else, including a proper focus upon people.* Have I ever become too caught up in this, possibly without realizing it? What negative effect does this have not only on living one's faith but also having a truly successful business?

8. Banks remarks that *faithfulness involves more than maintaining a consistent personal relationship with God and talking about one's faith with others. He goes on to say that leaders in particular have an obligation to be the voice of those in the workplace who often have little or no voice in all. Leaders are meant to influence the organization in the way it genuinely lives its core convictions and basic mission.* Do I agree with these perspectives? If so, how am I doing in being such a leader?

9. *At the heart of fidelity lives promise keeping. As much as possible, faithful leaders will seek to keep their word. They will seek to honor their promises as much as possible despite altered circumstances.* How am I doing with keeping my promises at work and at home? If there is room for further growth in this area, what do I need to concentrate on or to do?

10. How do I deal with mistakes, my own and others? How do I work out the balance between holding people, including myself, accountable and being appropriately forgiving?

11. What is my philosophy and faith perspective about job security -- my own and others?

    What am I doing or could I be doing better to assist people, especially in my own work environment, who are going through a layoff, a job change, or some other transition?

12. Max De Pree states that, *"Faithful leadership radiates from a person's spiritual and moral center. Its fundamental components are integrity in all things, an attitude of service, a concern for justice and equity, and a willingness to be vulnerable."* How have these characteristics become more a part of my life through the years?

    How does a person or an organization nurtures these qualities in others? How have I tried to do this? How might I do this even better?

13. In what ways do I believe that integrating faith and faithfulness into the workplace can generate significant growth potential for an organization?

Chapter 2 -- Integrity and the Art of Compromise
by Richard Higginson

Questions for Reflection -- *answer only those which "grab you"*

1. What is something within the reading assignment which particularly speaks to me right now (an insight, a challenge, a reminder, an "aha" moment)?

2. Could someone be personally honest and still not be a person of integrity? What other qualities are needed to be a person of integrity?

3. Higginson relates that integrity has to do with personal consistency. How personally consistent am I in the ways I treat people and in the ways I make decisions?

4. How would I respond to a person making the comment that integrity is "living a life true to one's convictions"? What is inadequate about this statement?

    Do I believe that there is a problem in our culture and in our world because too many people define integrity only as "living a life true to one's convictions"? What problems has this caused? What can be done to counteract this?

5. How do I react when I or my company/organization is being criticized? Am I able to listen to the criticism without becoming overly defensive, to think through what is being said to determine if even some small part of the criticism is justified? Share an example when I have done this.

6. What do I view as the relationship between being a person of integrity, being a whole person, and being a holy person?

    Which of these words am I comfortable with in terms of describing myself?

7. What insights does the biblical understanding of integrity give me? (pp. 23-24)

    What emphasis did Jesus give to what it means to be a person of integrity? How am I challenged by his words and example?

8. How do I deal with my own shortcomings, my own failures as a person and as a leader? Do I ever try to hide from others or even deny to my very self my faults?

    What has helped me be more honest with myself and others concerning my flaws?

9. Is there a need in our workplaces and in our society for a frank acknowledgment of sin? Why?

    The author states that an acknowledgment of one's own sin can actually be very liberating -- have I found this to be true in my own life? What further is needed beyond simply acknowledging one's own sin?

10. What challenges me in the quote from Campbell on page 26 -- *"the person of integrity is first and foremost a critic of self, of tendencies to self-deception and escape from reality, of desire for a false inner security in place of the confrontation with truth which integrity demands."*

11. How well have I been able to live my Christian convictions in my workplace? Have I ever compromised my convictions? If so, how? What have I learned about myself from doing this?

12. Have I had any experiences in which making the right ethical decision was very complex, in which there was not a clear-cut black and white solution? What did I do to sort this out? What did I learn from this?

13. What do I view as the place of compromise in decision-making? When is a compromise appropriate and when is it not so? What criteria do I use to make this judgment?

    Reflect upon and relate a situation in which I believe I made an appropriate compromise.

14. How do I interpret and apply in my daily work Jesus' words -- *"be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."*

Chapter 3 - Rebuilding Trust in the Fractured Workplace
by Carlton J. Snow

Questions for Reflection -- *answer only those which "grab you"*

1. What is something within the reading assignment which particularly speaks to me right now (an insight, a challenge, a reminder, an "aha" moment)?

2. What have I done to develop more trusting relationships among people at work? As a leader how can I foster greater trust at work?

3. When situations are uncertain and unpredictable how strong is my trust? What helps me remain trusting in these circumstances?

4. Do I believe that trust among co-workers as a social capital is as important as financial capital? Why or why not?

5. To build trust in organizations the author states that the communication of information should be reliable, accurate, timely, and sufficient. Based upon these criteria, how well do I communicate? How well does our organization overall communicate?

    Do our communication patterns interfere in any way with the level of trust among co-workers? If so, what can I do and what can the organization do to strengthen the kind of communication that fosters trust?

6. What are my comments concerning the author's statement, "Rigorous monitoring feeds an atmosphere of mistrust in the workplace by implicitly supporting a *them vs. us* mentality"?

7. How good am I at talking differences through with people? How effective am I in fostering conflict resolution? What are any ways that I might become better at this?

    How does our organization generally deal with conflict? Are the conflicts resolved in a context of trust and negotiation?

8. How ready am I to appropriately share decision-making responsibilities with others? How much do I trust in the abilities of others? If needed, what can I do to grow stronger in this area?

9. The author states -- "The leader who learns to listen not only for facts but also for feelings can do much to reduce suspicion in the workplace." What is an example from my own workplace experience that underscores this?

    How do I encourage other leaders and managers to be better listeners?

10. How open am I toward those workers with less status and power in the organization?

    How do I foster this openness toward the "least among us" within all in supervisory roles?

11. How do I view the role of the electronic media (e-mails, etc.) in organizational connectedness? What are the possible positive and negative aspects to this, especially in building trust?

    Do I need to foster more human connections within my workplace? If so, what can I and others do to assure greater "heart-to-heart communications?"

12. How do I and how does our organization work out the balance between fostering trust in the workplace and still relying on the law as "a complementary mechanism of control"?

13. How does my faith, my spirituality influence my ability to trust others and my capacity to be trustworthy?

Chapter 4: Confidence Under Pressure: How Faith Supports Risk Taking
by Winston E. Gooden

Questions for Reflection -- *answer only those which "grab you"*

1. What is something within the reading assignment which particularly speaks to me right now (an insight, a challenge, a reminder, an "aha" moment)?

2. Relate an experience in my work life which illustrates the author's comments, *"Faith helps leaders remain aware of their vulnerabilities without eroding their confidence, and it sustains them when they must pursue values and visions that put them and their organizations at risk."*

3. The author comments that *"life (and work) makes sense when we are engaged in a web of relationships and activities through which we experience meaning and significance."* How would I explain to someone else why having faith is vital to experiencing life, work, and relationships as meaningful and significant?

4. How does my faith currently influence my ability at work to deal with uncertainty, to take risks even when I am not absolutely sure how they will turn out?

5. In an ordinary day at work how does my faith in God influence my daily routine, my everyday leadership activities?

   Do I in any way experience God as my senior partner, my ultimate employer? If so, how does this play out?

6. How do I (or might I) connect our organizational vision with God's redemptive purposes? Does my faith perspective influence the overall organizational culture? If so, how?

7. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being very high), how would I rate my overall self-confidence in the midst of my work and leadership? What contributes to this? How does my faith influence my self-confidence?

8. Have I had any failures in my life which have eroded my self-confidence? Relate an example.

   How have I used such failures as constructive learning experiences, as ways to regain an appropriate and humble self-confidence? Relate an example of this. Did faith play a part in this? If so, how?

9. How have I as a leader, by my example, generated confidence and enthusiasm in others?

   How have I celebrated the success of others without feeling diminished?

10. How do I view the relationship between faith and risk taking in my life? How practically

does my faith assist me in times of uncertainty at work and in the rest of my life?

11. What are my thoughts about the author's statement, *"The central task of leadership is to imagine a future and move people toward it. Therefore, the leader is a risk taker by definition because he or she leads others in particular directions, with no proof of eventual success."*

    How have I done this?

12. How have I helped to create a culture that supports appropriate risk taking? Am I being called to do any more in this regard? If so, what?

13. Am I being called to take the risk to create a workplace climate that is more hospitable to the spiritual life? If so, how can I encourage this?

14. How does my faith help me in the midst of self-confidence to be more aware of my flaws, my weaknesses?

    How do I view the relationship between self-confidence and humility in my life?

15. Is God calling me to take any other risks right now in my work or my personal life in order to be more faithful to him, in order to further his vision of how we as human beings are called to work and live together with integrity and love?

    If so, how will I respond to this call?

Chapter 5: Humility and Vision in the Life of the Effective Leader
by Benjamin D. Williams

Questions for Reflection -- *answer only those which "grab you"*

1. What is something within the reading assignment which particularly speaks to me right now (an insight, a challenge, a reminder, an "aha" moment)?

2. Williams states that Christian leadership is different because it has a different starting point -- a relationship with Jesus Christ and a vision of the kingdom that he came to inaugurate. He points out three areas of emphasis:

   - It is based on the promise of serving as Christ served.

   - It is vision-dependent and kingdom-centered.

   - Its task is to incarnate that vision.

   In what ways do I see my leadership influenced by these Christian perspectives?

   How do I want to be more deeply influenced by these Christian perspectives?

3. What are my comments about Hopko's statement (page 64), *"Human beings are created to imitate the loving humility of God himself, the divine service revealed to the world in the person of Jesus… The disciples of Jesus are called to imitate their Master and Lord in his self-emptying sacrifice of love upon the cross."* Do I believe that such humility and sacrifice is possible at work? How does this statement challenge me in any way?

4. How does my faith influence my personal life vision and my work's organizational vision?

5. What inspires or challenges me about a Christian working definition of vision on page 66: *"A clear mental image of the Kingdom of God that pictures things as God would have them be and which guides implementation; the Holy Trinity as the source of our direction and decisions."*

   How does or could this Christian vision have greater practical influence in my day-to-day leadership and motivation?

6. Does my organization/workplace have a truly shared vision or more of a "sortavision" (page 69)?

   Am I being called in any way to foster a greater *shared* vision in my organization? If so, what first steps might I take?

7. How can I *encourage* a vision which includes for me a sense of doing God's will *without imposing* such a vision upon the organization?

8. How do I understand and experience the virtue of humility in my life as a leader?

9. Have I ever experienced the tension between confidently recognizing my abilities and being overly prideful? How do I resolve this tension in my life and work?

10. What is the basis for my own self-esteem? Do I ever get too caught up in measuring my self-worth according to worldly terms such as accomplishments and possessions? How do I move beyond this?

11. How would I best express to someone else why humility is important in the life of a leader, in the life of everyone?