

# ONE

## LEADERHOLISM THE ADDICTIVE OBSESSION

Why are we so infatuated with leadership? Why is following so disagreeable to us?

—Scott Bessenecker<sup>1</sup>

It wasn't until I began to try and understand life and organizations from a follower perspective that I noticed the overt negative bias toward followers in the leadership literature.

—Rusty Ricketson<sup>2</sup>

**F**or me there is just something about the smell of a book. Old or new—it really doesn't matter. I've considered the possibility that I need therapy, because the scent of a book could be regarded as a bit of a fetish with me. When I am reading a book, every once and a while I can't help but to hold it to my nose to catch a whiff of its aroma. For the longest time I said I would never own an electronic reader until one was invented that could emit a book scent. One day I even began wondering if there were other people out there like me. Could it be that someone had created a cologne or perfume that smelled like a book? I did an online search, and sure enough there is a fragrance on the market that claims to smell like a library. So I guess I'm not the only one out here that needs counseling.

For over twenty years one of my favorite places to while away a day is at Steel's, a Kansas City treasure trove of used Christian books. The entire place smells like one giant book. I love to spend a cold winter's day in this floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall maze of used Christian books. One day as I warmed my hands around a still steaming hot latte while strolling among the books at Steel's, I had a thought: "I wonder how many books they have on the subject of leadership and how that number compares with the number of books on the subject of discipleship and disciple making." Seminary libraries and well-stocked Christian bookstores can tell us a lot about variations in theology and the overall history of Christianity, along with trends and fads that have moved in and out of the faith through the ages. I found my way to the leadership section to conduct a survey.

There were so many books on Christian leadership that I had to take a couple of steps back from the large wall of a half dozen or more seven-foot-tall, five-foot-wide shelves holding them to view them all. I really wasn't too surprised that there were so many books on leadership. After all, there were seventy thousand books in the store. It was to be expected. The surprise

came when I moved to the section that contained the discipleship books. Stepping back wasn't necessary this time. Discipleship as a subject matter required less than one shelf to contain the volumes. This meant that for every book on discipleship making there were about ten books on leadership. I was disappointed but not surprised. I knew this was not a case of supply giving way to demand.

I have been around the publishing scene enough to know that most Christian publishers, though they are in the industry because of their love for Christ and the kingdom of God, print most of their books based not on what they deem the readership needs but on what they figure readers *want*. They can't sell what people won't buy. In fact, this book you are reading right now was passed over by one publisher who told me, "Lance, you are right about what is needed here, but pastors don't want to hear about following or serving; they're interested in how to be leaders." I answered, "Precisely—thus the need for the book."

## **THE LEADERSHIP COCKTAIL**

We need a leadership sobriety checkpoint. We must sober up. There is a drinking problem in the church today. What we are about to delve into in the coming pages and chapters of this book is not meant as spear throwing and criticism for mere criticism's sake. This is more of an intervention. Those of us who are questioning the most prominent contemporary church leadership practices may be looked at as nothing more than behind the times or prudish, dismissed as mere critics. That is not the aim here—far from it. I just happen to believe friends shouldn't let friends lead churches (while) drunk.

Leadership could be justifiably called an addictive obsession in the church today. Attendance at church-planting and leadership conferences swell into the thousands, with attendees hanging on every leadership nugget, hoping to gain an edge from leadership gurus that dip cupfuls of church growth punch, spiked with shots of leadership greatness. Pastors and church planters leave the gatherings loaded with books and binders,

staggering out to put into practice the methods of the experts, in hopes of developing the next gigachurch. Blogs and leadership-soaked websites clog the Internet with article after article, pithy quote after pithy quote being tweeted and facebooked by the thousands every day.

Over the last two decades in particular we have witnessed the rise of the superstar church leader—the skilled preacher who is also a world-class CEO type—possessing the ability to attract and inspire followers and build a great organization. The predominant leadership patterns of the twenty-first-century church have been cut from the forms and models of rainmakers, larger-than-life personalities who are gifted with the capacity to paint a compelling picture of a preferred future along with the acumen to bring that future into reality. Some church leaders have even given titles to themselves that promote this skill, calling themselves futurists, culture guides, architects of transformation, and so on. Whatever happened to the good ole apostles, prophets, and evangelists?

I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of pastors and leaders that are addicted to leadership are deeply sincere in their love for Jesus and the cause of the kingdom of God. The problem is that the punch has been spiked! And it is past time we recognize it, analyze it, throw it out, and go back to the original ingredients. Several factors or beliefs make up the recipe I call the leadership cocktail, the drink of choice for the vast majority of current evangelical pastors and church staff members. These ingredients include a handful of ideologies that are passively chugged down without questioning their source or the possibility that they induce a stupor that is often in direct opposition to the clearly stated commands of Jesus and the authors of the New Testament Epistles.

Sometimes we just need to laugh at ourselves in order to not just sit and cry. I have very few friends who are in vocational ministry that have not been caught up in the grip of leaderoholism at one time or another. I'm not here to throw stones, because it was certainly my addiction and I will rat myself out

in the pages to come. Brant Hansen wrote a series of blogs that parodied the obsession with leadership among church leaders. He called it *The 417 Rules of Awesomely Bold Leadership*, and it is written from his alter ego, Brant Hansen, Vision Coach. Here are a couple of his posts:

**Rule #281:**

**What's More Challenging to Lead: A Church, or a Business, or the Military? Actually, They're Exactly the Same**

Here's the point: I'm often asked, because I teach leadership to church AND business leaders AND military generals, using the same exact principles, "What's more challenging?" And the answer is that it's exactly the same. As the kids say these days, "Duh!" friend! (I smile as I write that!) *All take awesomeness. All take boldness. All take gutsy decisions and command presence. All require looking to the future, seeing and seizing the trends. All demand a leader who sorta listens, but then calls the shots, and tells people what to do, because the buck stops here. And like Patton said, "A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next week,"* and that's true on the battlefield, in the boardroom, or at V.B.S. *Obviously, all leadership principles apply to everyone, everywhere, regardless of context.* That's what's so awesome about it. I was explaining this while tandem-biking through Texas with Brett Favre, and . . .<sup>3</sup>

**Rule #114:**

**There's only one way Leadership gets done: *Through talking about leading.***

*[Excerpt]*

. . . and I'm here to tell you, that next morning I woke up with sixteen more rules and twelve more acronyms! My publisher was thrilled to get the manuscript on time, again. *Leadership is all about coming through in the clutch.* And you can't just "get" leadership. You have to live it. And how do you "live it"? Good question, friend! Here's how: *You travel around and talk about it.* Endlessly. Traveling around, talk-

ing about it, writing about it, coming up with rules about it, rhyming it with other words, googling for quotes about it, putting those quotes on notecards, and updating your books with the things that you wrote on those notecards. I, the Vision Coach, a true leader? Well, friend, sometimes I can barely get out the door in the morning. Why? Friend, I'm pinned in by stacks of thousands of notecards.

. . . yes, I'm a leader. ***Leadership is talking about leadership.*** It's like my friend says, who met Tiger Woods: "Simply hanging around with golfers doesn't make you a golfer." No. But traveling the world, yammering on about golfing, without pause, for decades? Now you're golfing, friend!<sup>4</sup>

## ***JUST A SERVANT***

When was the last time you heard of a conference on followership or servanthship? I am pretty sure I have never heard of one. Or when have you ever heard of someone described as a great servant or a great follower? Who wants to be one of those? There is just nothing compelling about those prospects. The idea of following or serving has no pizzazz. After all, we know that *anyone* can be a follower. And waiting tables is what people do in the early stages of trying to make it to the top.

The attention is all on becoming a leader, then becoming a better leader, and then becoming a leader of leaders. Leadership is the subject deemed to be most important in the business culture and in contemporary church culture. Leadership education and development has become a \$50 billion<sup>5</sup> industry in itself. But the idea of being labeled as a follower or servant is a derisive thought to most people. Think of the many times you have heard someone issue the challenge by asking, "Are you a leader or a follower?" To accept the label "follower" is perceived as giving up—an immediate surrender and abandonment of the possibility for greatness or of living up to one's full potential. Many times I have been in on conversations where someone assesses another person's capabilities, dismissing that person from consideration for a particular invitation or promotion with

the phrase, “He [or She] is a follower, not a leader.” It is as if servants or followers are a dime a dozen.

Author Barbara Kellerman says,

Leadership expert John Gardner so disliked the word *follower* that he chose simply not to use it. “The connotations of the word ‘follower’ suggest too much passivity and dependence to make it a fit term for those who are at the other end of the dialogue with leaders,” Gardner wrote. “For this reason I shall make frequent use of the word ‘constituent.’”<sup>6</sup>

Though Jesus obviously thought highly of the idea of following—using it in his invitation, “Follow me” (Matt. 16:24)—it is virtually detested today. Sure, followers are necessary to build a great church, but you would never want to be one yourself. Followership advocate Robert Kelley writes,

The negative followership myth has its roots in Social Darwinism. “Survival of the fittest” pits contenders against one another like the ancient Greek gods who battled one another. To struggle and compete is natural, good, and right. The winners, by definition, are leaders; the losers are everyone else. The Darwinistic viewpoint has infused culturally charged values into the terms “follower” and “leader.” It also created a false, hierarchical topography, as if only leaders matter while the remaining 90 to 99 percent of the world is inferior and not worth mapping.<sup>7</sup>

One of the greatest deceptions of leaderoholism revolves around the notion that we are to gather and make followers for *ourselves*. What could be more damning and damaging than this wrongheaded idea? But it flows with astounding vigor in church leadership circles. The idea is, of course, never presented as such and would be categorically denied by just about any evangelical leader. But a thoughtful reflection on what today’s pastors and church staffs have actually been absorbing into their thinking says otherwise.

Especially over the last decade or so, the evangelical world has been flooded with books, conferences, and seminars on leadership. Among the concepts being promoted are those that

emphasize the importance of being a successful leader in order to attract successful leaders. This emphasis feeds and perpetuates the idea that we are called to build *great* organizations and to do this we have to be incredibly skilled and exceptional leaders ourselves because we are going to attract people like ourselves. Again, that sounds really good on the surface. But do you see the focus behind this concept? It makes everything revolve around *us*. Not *him*. Not Jesus.

It would be crazy for me to propose that we are not to do whatever it takes on our part to be the best at what we are called to do. I am not advocating that at all. Neither am I opposing excellence in ministry. At issue here is the idea that our aim as pastors and leaders should be to get people to follow *us* and ultimately to get *great* people to follow the greatness they see in us. Such an idea should be clearly understood as insidious. It is a mind-set that makes who *I* am the major interest. The concept is that *I* need to develop a magnetic skill set to such a degree that people will follow me so that ultimately I develop a great church.

Another idea influencing the evangelical world tells leaders that getting people to accept them as leaders is the prerequisite for getting people to accept their vision. This sounds innocuous enough. But let's take a moment and think it through. We are to sell ourselves *first* and then we will get to the Jesus stuff? So what would happen if we just give people Jesus straightaway? What if we give people Jesus and his vision? At issue is Jesus. When do we get to him?

When we lead with ourselves, we have left the trail of following Jesus. When we promote ourselves, we are diminishing the promotion of Jesus. John the Baptist, an incredibly charismatic individual with an innate ability to draw disciples to himself, knew he had to diminish the focus on himself in order to shine the spotlight on Jesus. He told his disciples, "The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.



Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:29-30).

Recently two longtime friends posted some wedding pictures online. I remembered the day, almost thirty years ago. There was Kim and Jerry, the bride and groom, along with the rest of the wedding party. I was one of the groomsmen, having grown up with them both. I looked through the pictures and reminisced about being with them that day. I also was reminded of what great hair I had then and how slim and trim I was. I think I looked pretty good. About fifty comments were posted by mutual friends after Kim and Jerry posted their wedding pictures. People commented about how great the couple looked—what a beautiful bride Kim was and how handsome a groom Jerry was. But do you know what? There was not one single comment about how good *I* looked. Not a mention of *me*. Why? The other three groomsmen and I were there to make this the best day of Jerry’s life. We were there to support him and make the day about meeting his needs and wants. We were in the wedding to help shine the light on the bridegroom. To bring attention to ourselves at the wedding would have been totally out of place.

Jesus, the one and only, is *the* Leader with *the* vision. The rest of us—even the best of us—are called to point away from ourselves and clearly to *him*. To make Jesus the one and only premier focus must be our one and only premier focus. Just like a groomsman, we are honored to stand with the groom, but we are to fade into the crowd. Those in the wedding party are not there to see us. The spotlight is to be on the groom, on Jesus. Just as it was with John the Baptist, our joy will never be complete as long as we continue to increase the spotlight on ourselves at the expense of shining it on Jesus.

Again, the idea perpetuated by the contemporary church’s leadership obsession, that we are tasked with getting others to follow *us*, pushes Jesus into the shadows. The stake I want to drive into the ground here is that we need to become better followers and servants of Jesus, who point to him. To focus on

getting people to buy into us is beyond a slippery slope. It is a vertical drop.

A further concept given much attention in evangelical circles is the idea that leadership is all about having the skill set to acquire followers. The million-dollar question that should be asked is, “Followers of whom?” The near wholesale buy-in of this starting point within the leadership rhetoric of the contemporary church is rampant. It has become the foundation of Leadership 101. The lesson is that people have to go through our leadership greatness before they can get to Jesus.

The subtlety here lies in the twisted ideology that we should be setting about the task of getting people to follow *us*. Now many readers may say, “Of course that is not the intention. That is understood.” I agree that that is not the intention, but I disagree that this is understood. My experience with pastors and church leaders makes it abundantly clear that most of them believe they must be super leaders to get people to follow them, and getting people to follow them should always be squarely in mind. This necessitates an almost ceaseless self-centered focus. Not only does this ideology constantly train a person’s eyes and heart away from Jesus, but also it loads on that person tremendous pressure and stress as he or she strives for leadership greatness. For a pastor or ministry staff member to fail at “leadership” is considered near to ultimate failure.

## **SOBERING UP**

I considered beginning this chapter with, “Hi, my name is Lance. I’m a leaderoholic.” This is very familiar territory for me. If I am qualified to write on this subject, it is only because I am a recovering leaderoholic myself. After years and years of drinking from the leadership tap and striving to create the best “Leader Lance” possible, I finally hit the wall. I wasn’t sure if I had reached the proverbial point of burnout, was in a midlife crisis, or had just gotten bored of pastoring. The only thing I was certain of was that I could not continue on in the way I was going.

I attended all the high-voltage leadership conferences and spent enormous amounts of time and money on leadership books. My own “leadership capacity” was a constant matter of attention for me. A close second was the development of “more and better” leaders in the church where I was the “lead” pastor. My leadership was trumping Jesus’ lordship in my actual daily focus and pursuit. For me, the obsessive self-focus became evident one day when I read a passage I had read literally thousands of times before. This time it finally hit home. This time it read *me*. “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

This passage might as well have been from a Jules Verne novel. “Wow, that would be a great place to live,” I thought, “but I can’t relate to that at all. Leading this church is anything but ‘easy,’ and the burden I feel is anything but ‘light.’ And I certainly do not feel ‘rest’ in my soul. I’m stressed out most of the time.” I sat for about an hour, just staring, moving my eyes back and forth from this passage to the wooded area outside my office window. I began to have a long conversation with myself, “If Jesus was not lying—and if his ‘yoke is [truly] easy’ and his ‘burden is [truly] light’—then there is only one conclusion: I must be wearing someone else’s yoke, and I must be carrying someone else’s burden.” “Where is this constant pressure coming from?” I wondered.

This was the point in my journey where I realized that much of the stress I felt, as a lead pastor, was self-inflicted. I was living life in a perpetual *leaderohol* stupor. I was binging on leadership and suffering constant leadership hangovers. My head hurt from all the strategic thinking, initiative scheming, and organizational guruizing I had become convinced was necessary for steering a “successful” church. Jesus was pretty much nonexistent in most of it. My soul was pickled and parched at the same time. I was thirsting for the presence of the very

Christ who had been crowded out of my soul by the obsession of leading *for* him.

I began to look at my job description—not the one filed away on my computer or in a desk drawer—my mental job description. I started to think through all the things *I* was supposed to be as the “lead” pastor. Here is what I came up with:

- An expert theologian
- An expert communicator
- An expert visionary
- An expert on marriage
- An expert on sex
- An expert on parenting
- An expert administrator
- An expert manager
- An expert CEO
- The face of the church

That’s all. Sure. No problem.

Fitting Jesus into my schedule had become a chore in itself. I had to admit that I was too distracted by *leading* for him to keep my eyes on *following* him. After all, the church experts were telling me I had to be a great leader because I first had to get people to follow *me*. It was just assumed that I would be following Christ as I led for him.

Herein lies another issue—the assumption that most leaders are following Christ in the first place. To follow Jesus goes way beyond saluting the Four Spiritual Laws and having a consistent quiet time. It means to walk in his footsteps. It means to pattern one’s life after what Jesus said and did. To follow Jesus means to follow him in the way he treated people, regardless of their social status or what they could give him in return. It means to follow his gentleness, humility, kindness, and love in the most strident of circumstances. Following Jesus means treating the people that you work with on a daily basis with goodness and brotherly love.

As we move through part I of this book, we will look at how the leadership obsession so often draws us off the path of

followership and away from the posture of a servant. How did we get to this place? Over four decades of marinating in church growth theory has left the vast majority of evangelical denominational and local church leaders wandering in the weeds of a consumer church field. It has created a clergy crop that views the church from the perspective of marketers and businesspersons and a Christian mass that views itself as clientele.

A lot of finger pointing has emerged as leaders decry Christians who are consumers of religious goods and services. But what should we have expected? We (leaders) are the ones that created the church consumer culture in the first place. Christians in North America have become who we made them to be. Our obsession with the corporate marketing tactics approach to leading the church feeds the obsession for Christians to look for the “best deal” on a church. Neil Cole comments on this phenomenon: “Many pastors complain about the consumeristic mind-set in their churches. It is a ‘what-have-you-done-for-me-lately’ attitude that causes the pastor to feel pressure to keep up with the megachurch around the corner. But our people have a consumeristic attitude because we have trained them to think this way. When we try to ‘sell’ our worship and programs to the largest crowd possible, we will attract and reinforce a consumer mind-set.”<sup>8</sup>

## **IS LEADERSHIP NECESSARY?**

No one needs to convince me that today’s church needs leadership. It needs it as much as ever. By no means am I saying there should be no leadership in the church. That is not my beef and not the message of this book. The most pressing issue, or question, is what *kind* of leadership should exist in the church? What does leadership in the church mean? Or what *should* it mean? My chief concern is tied to the most common patterns of leadership we see in the church—how leadership has been twisted and distorted in the way it is defined, modeled, and practiced.

Second, leadership has become the dominant focus for those who have been called by God into roles as guides and servants for the body of Christ. It has literally become an obsession. I have heard Leonard Sweet call it the “leadership fetish.” It has become an industry unto itself within the church world. All the while, discipleship has languished.

A recent report based on a joint research project conducted between the Exponential Church Planting Network and LifeWay Christian Resources highlights the concern. In the report, titled *7 Top Issues Church Planters Face*, Ed Stetzer explained that the research was based on interviews with over thirty well-known leaders who had over six hundred years of cumulative experience working with hundreds of church planters. Stetzer then began to unpack the findings:

Leadership development is the most frequently cited challenge of planters according to our research in this survey of church planting leaders and thinkers. Leadership issues included recruiting and developing leaders; implementing teams; creating a reproducible leadership development approach; developing a leader/oversight/elder board; hiring and leading staff; discerning changes required to facilitate growth; healthy decision making; and delegating and empowering volunteers.<sup>9</sup>

In a subsequent post, Stetzer continued:

I asked [Darrin Patrick], “Why do most churches stay small?” Darrin explained:

Largely because most pastors don’t know how to build systems, structures, and processes that are not contingent upon them. Most pastors can care for people, but don’t build systems of care. Most pastors can develop leaders individually, but lack the skill to implement a process of leadership development. When a pastor can’t build systems and structures that support ministry, the only people who are cared for or empowered to lead are those who are “near” the pastor or those very close to

the pastor. This limits the size of the church to the size of the pastor.<sup>10</sup>

Todd Wilson, who leads the Exponential network, also commented on the report:

Discipleship is cited as a uniquely . . . separate thing from leadership development in the report. Where leadership development is in the context of building the institution bigger, discipleship is in the context of growing the believer better. . . . What if our paradigm of seeing them as distinct . . . is actually part of the problem? Isn't it strange that we are coming off two to three decades of LEADERSHIP . . . as the silver bullet (or pill) for everything and now . . . we've entered a period where the most elusive, frustrating issue for most pastors is with ineffectiveness in DISCIPLESHIP? Down deep most know . . . we are struggling to make disciples who are a distinctly different aroma to the world.<sup>11</sup>

I believe Wilson's conclusions are right on. Discipleship has suffered in obscurity. It's been choked out by leadership smoke. The wood needed to keep the fires of discipleship and followership burning has been hijacked to the furnaces of leadership development. Is it really true that the most pressing need in our churches has to do with the complexity of systems, structures, and processes? Or does the *real* need have to do with abandoning our addiction to artificial, institutionalized leadership forms and returning to the task of disciple making by following Jesus?

It is as if we have built restaurants when we should have built culinary schools. We have spent most of our resources and time on feeding people rather than training them to feed themselves and others. If understanding systems and structures of organizational wizardry is so vital to the expansion and operation of the church, why didn't the writers of the New Testament provide guidance on the subject? The fact we feel we must look beyond the Scriptures to gain an understanding of this subject should be a strong hint that God is not interested in it in the first place.

In the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, Red, played by Morgan Freeman, reflects on the news that Brooks, a recently paroled lifelong prisoner, had hung himself: “These walls are funny. First you hate ‘em, then you get used to ‘em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on them. That’s institutionalized.”<sup>12</sup>

Prisoners become institutionalized because they have lost the ability to make decisions on their own. The controllers above them make the key decisions. They tell the prisoners when to wake up, when to eat, when to shower, when to exercise, and when to sleep. Could it be that our need for the current systems and processes of care exist because we fail to make disciples in the first place? Could it be that the “follow me” path, laid down by Jesus, is intended to be the system itself?

The near wholesale abandonment of the “follow me” message and pattern has left us with institutionalized Christians by the millions. While most pastors are consumed with getting people to follow them to *do church*, very few pastors can point to a handful of individuals they have invited to follow them as they *do life*. Most Christians have scant ability to mine the rich fields of Scripture for themselves. The Christian living sections at bookstores get bigger and bigger as Christians try to figure out this “complicated” lifestyle that the early church simply called “the Way” (see Acts 9:2).

This is the primary reason for the need of the weekly motivational talk that we call the sermon. Many of the believers in our churches are in utter dependence on the weekly sermon because they were never trained to study the Bible for themselves. And I dare say that many pastors are unknowingly addicted to the adrenalin that comes from mesmerizing an audience each week. I am convinced that much of this is undiagnosed codependency. I have conversed with many ministers not currently pastoring a church who talk about how much they miss preaching on a regular basis, but I cannot recall one conversation where one of them has said they miss mentoring (discipling) others.

Jesus had to “unteach” his first followers quite a bit. Their entire understanding of the coming of the kingdom of God



meant power and domination. Few of us today are any different. Discipleship to Jesus means we must be as quick and willing to unlearn as we are to learn—probably more so. It seems that no sooner had Jesus’ disciples settled into the rhythm of following him than they had developed personal ambitions to capitalize on their position as his companions. Similar ambitions exist across the evangelical Christian landscape today.

There are several instances in which we observe Jesus’ first followers asking the wrong questions. They were consumed with thoughts concerning their own positions and leadership status. The brothers James and John come to mind. James and John wanted to ensure their rank in what they assumed would be a hierarchical government, established by Jesus. They wanted it so bad that they got their mother to talk to Jesus about letting them have the top spots in his administration—which they were sure he was going to establish (see Matt. 20:20-21).

Look around and you will see that little has changed today. In the camps of Christianity we have placed a disproportionate focus on subjects and issues orbiting around leadership. At the time of this writing a quick search of books on the subjects of Christian leadership and discipleship at Amazon.com brought up about twenty-four thousand books. Of these books, 35 percent were on discipleship and 65 percent were on Christian leadership. Only 2 percent of the books mentioned followership, and the overwhelming majority of those were not related to the subject of Christianity. This does not take into account the massive amount of non-Christian leadership books that are read by pastors and church planters.

If we compare these ratios to New Testament verses that mention “discipleship,” “following,” and “leadership,” the results are stunning. The word “disciple” is mentioned 260 times, the phrase “follow me” is used 23 times, and the word “lead” or “leader” is mentioned only 7 times. That is a forty to one ratio of discipleship/followership to leadership.

Granted, the metrics above are simply an unscientific stab at gaining an understanding of what the Christian leadership com-

munity has its eyes trained on. I do not present it as empirical data, but it is telling at the very least. When will Jesus' emphasis become our emphasis? When will we *hear* what Jesus was saying in response to James and John's fixation on leadership?