

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The mining or extraction of factors that foster *followership* was tedious and yet rewarding. At times this writer wondered how best to sift through the multitudinous morass of mentoring resources. The pursuit of the understanding of *followership* helped to serve as a base for limiting the study. However, even as *followership* materials grow, still the number of resources dealing with *followership* is limited, except in the world of abstracts, which if accessed, could add up to significant expense. Without Sage Publications and their new *Leadership Encyclopedia* essays, articles, and case studies, minimal documentation on *followership* would have been available. Popular studies continue to pour forth voluminous quantities on the subject of leadership, but this writer found minimal references on *followership*. Most of the conclusions that will be drawn by readers have been extrapolated from the influences that draw followers to leadership.

This writer initiated this study in order to benefit from *followership* hints and instructions as he works in relationships with younger pastors. Several key factors, which will be outlined below, rose to prominence and may serve to strengthen this senior pastor's awareness of the intern pastor's needs in *followership*.

Significantly, in contemporary literature of spiritual mentoring, the mentee or follower has the power of influence and the privilege to proactively and intentionally initiate learning experiences and exchange points of development in the mentor-mentee relationship.

What appeared and was noted as significant after many hours of research was the recognition that so much content of those materials is co-authored (mentored). This writer found that fact to be exemplary and invigorating, especially for *followership*. Solomon's counsel proves insightful: "Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour" (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Furthermore, the writer gleaned from the study the need for a blend and balance of factors which are crucial for excellence in *followership*. In fact, the blending of the rational and relational factors seemed to be an intersection of accomplishment in the research.¹ If relational, feel-good factors were the only ones prodding *followership*, substance would be lacking. If rational factors were the only ones related to task-orientation and production, attitude would be absent. This writer maintains that a blend of these two factors remains significant to the success of true and pure *followership*.

To not be able to pursue the issue of spontaneity in *followership* was disappointing. Elaine Cox wrote an impressive article entitled, "For Better, for Worse: The Matching Process in Formal Mentoring Schemes."² If time and resources would have permitted, a study of structured versus unstructured matching of mentors and mentees in the *followership* programs for the benefits of spontaneity and serendipity would have been pursued. That study will be for another occasion.

¹Offermann, 831.

²Elaine Cox, "For Better, for Worse: The Matching Process in Formal Mentoring Schemes," *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 13, no. 3 (2005): 403-414.

Other areas this writer wishes could have been excavated a bit more are storytelling and case studies. In these studies, learning seems to be able to happen more naturally as mentors share from their own experiences. A follower is more likely to relate to a *story* than to a *precept* or *theory* expostulated between the mentor and mentee. Storytelling builds relationships. Some references spoke to this attraction of storytelling¹, but this path was not pursued by the writer. Analyzing case studies would be an interesting phenomenon. The writer did however speak to identification and the incarnational model which has the potential to draw the heart of the follower into a stronger bond with the mentor.

Reflecting upon the higher-level factors that foster *followership* in spiritual mentoring, this writer found lifelong learning near the top because lifelong learning promotes a positive course of action when a mentor deals with mistakes, crises, and catastrophes. That theme was of major encouragement for this writer.

Dealing with confrontation and risk-taking is presented also as significant to the success of *followership* because courage to confront affects how one deals with visioning, adaptation to change, and challenging the hackneyed statement: “That’s the way we have always done it!”

Another major factor for fostering *followership* is taking time to listen to the mentee or follower. Listening has a bonding effect with the mentee.

Speaking earlier of balance and blending, this writer considers one of the most heart-stirring discoveries to be the fact that influence is a two-way street for the mentor-

¹Shirley Peddy, *The Art of Mentoring*, 2nd ed. (Houston: Bullion Books, 2001).

mentee relationship. The mentee can influence the mentor and later exceed and excel the capacities of the more experienced partner, if mentors give the freedom of empowerment to their followers.

Furthermore, the power of influence can be indirect or direct. Persuasion can often occur because of another factor—modeling. A poor model which lacks courage, care, and integrity will not be productive for the follower; whereas, a model of courage, care, and integrity will accelerate development and growth in the follower.

To have been more comprehensive in the distinction between the fine nuances of definitions of mentee and protégé would have been beneficial, but limitations will not allow that breadth. Possibly, a linguistics study will come from research in the future.

The greatest implications of this study became evident when the writer caught the principle of Jesus in *followership*, making disciples after Himself. Mentors are not to disciple followers after themselves, but rather instruct and guide them to imitate and follow the Master Mentor (Matt 28:18,19). That a senior pastor of some years should finally have discovered such a nugget of thought might be surprising, but in relation to *followership*, that was a new and powerful discovery in the discipline of spiritual mentoring.

Along with that revelation, a corollary idea developed, in which the spiritual mentoring of disciples or followers refers to the principle of replication of more followers. In other words, spiritual mentoring is never finished. When mentees become mentors, their assignment is to begin the training of other mentees and more followers.

Finally, this passage from the writings of the Apostle Paul leaves the reader with this thought: “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word

in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia” (1 Thessalonians 1:6,7).