The Christian Leader

Written by pastor and author Bill Hull, *The Christian Leader: Rehabilitating Our Addiction to Secular Leadersh*ip, as the subtitle suggests, is a book calling Kingdom leaders to pattern their leadership after Jesus, not the models of leadership that typically surround us day in and day out. His key premise is not about improving Christian organizations, but about changing how Christians lead.

I believe that you will find this book both thought-provoking and convicting. Check out these BookNotes to get a sense of what this book has to offer.

Title: *The Christian Leader: Rehabilitating Our Addiction to Secular Leadership*

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Book Description:

Most leadership literature talks about having the "right kind" of leadership personality. You know the type: big-picture visionaries who serve others and get the best out of people. But the popular pattern of doing what works and getting rewarded for it is actually the enemy of Christian leadership. It thrives on making our work impersonal and exploitive. Far too often, it serves the leader rather than those the leader leads. Sadly, this pattern dominates Christian leadership in the West.

We need a different style of leadership — one patterned after Jesus. Jesus influenced others because of *who he was*, not because he was well-known or a person of power or because he had mastered a set of skills or implemented an effective leadership strategy. He could have completed his mission living in *your* house, driving *your* car, married to *your* spouse, working at *your* office, and raising *your* kids because leadership comes down to character. Many who aspire to leadership are looking for the right circumstances so they can lead. Many in positions of leadership find it difficult to lead because of obstacles, such as a lack of funds, authority, and or confusion about methods. Jesus faced all of these —and more — yet he accomplished his mission.

This is not a book about improving Christian organizations; it is about changing *how* Christians lead. It is for anyone with a megaphone, a platform to speak, who wants to lead others in being a witness for truth. It is for people with a pulpit, whether that pulpit be a business or a position of influence in a domain of the culture: entertainment, sports, politics, industry, the arts, academia, or religion. If you are someone to whom others listen— this book is for you.

Each chapter begins with a title and statement about Jesus' life. Jesus was a different kind of teacher. The Pharisees focused on doing the right thing. Jesus emphasized becoming the kind of person who wants to do the right thing. Others taught the importance of doing good; Jesus taught how to be good. He didn't teach behavior modification alone; he taught how to change the sources of behavior. Knowing how to lead others begins by seeing Jesus as *your* leader.

Book Quotes:

Like a cancer growing undetected in our bodies, every leader has specific pitfalls that will eventually sabotage them if they aren't addressed. LOCATION: 106

I never wanted to be an addict. I've never met a pastor or leader who wanted to be a narcissist or a dictator or who wanted to hurt people. Countless men and women start off well on the leadership journey, but they end badly. They are sabotaged by their blind spots, unaware of their weaknesses. If we want to be a Christian leader, we need to know Christ and be known by Christ. LOCATION: 107

Leaders will always have people following them — that's nothing special. But good leaders are learners. The fact that you are reading this book proves that you have a desire to grow. Every disciple of Jesus Christ should be a learner, and the moment you stop learning, you stop leading. LOCATION: 111

…true Christian leaders celebrate sacrifice, seek humility, and endure hardship — not as a spiritual badge of honor of separation from the pack — but as a natural way of life. They deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow Christ daily. LOCATION: 118

The question that has nagged me is this: Did Jesus fit the successful leadership profile? From everything I know about him, he didn't, nor does he intend or expect that any of us fit the profile. I am writing this book because I believe we need to change how the church views Christian leadership. We have paid homage to a secular model. We have secularized Christian leadership. Now we need to change the way Christians practice leadership. LOCATION: 146

I propose that we need a different style of leadership — one patterned after Jesus. We need to learn to influence others out of our character, for that is what Jesus did. LOCATION: 175

Jesus influenced others because of who he was, not because he was well known or a person of power or because he had mastered a set of skills or implemented an effective leadership strategy. LOCATION: 185

The Pharisees focused on doing the right thing. Jesus emphasized becoming the kind of person who wants to do the right thing. Others taught the importance of doing good; Jesus taught how to be good. He didn't teach behavior modification alone; he taught how to change the sources of behavior. It's my hope that you will begin to think of Jesus as your leader. Then you will know what to do with your calling to lead others. LOCATION: 203

Clearly, it is not the non-Christian world alone that needs to be convinced that Jesus is competent as a world-class leader; Christians also need convincing. There is a great gulf between honoring Jesus as God and Savior of the world and seeing him as someone who is competent to help with tough decisions. LOCATION: 233

And in that larger laboratory of knowledge that includes knowledge of persons, Jesus is uniquely qualified to be a leader, for he changed ordinary men filled with fear and doubt into courageous zealots who changed history. As God, Jesus is the perfect model for leadership because he knows everything that is to be known about it. Can you think of a stronger qualification for a leader? I cannot. LOCATION: 323

The research confirmed that whatever the church is focusing on, it isn't working. The problem is simple to define: The American church is not producing mature leaders and followers of Christ who are vibrant, mature, and engaged with their neighbors and communities. The evidence is plainly before us. LOCATION: 372

Christian leaders must pay urgent attention to persuading docile Christians to take up the life of discipleship. For the truth is that five hundred awakened Christians are far more powerful than five hundred new Christians.

This is only true, however, when intentional apprenticeship is taken up, because then multiplication is possible. LOCATION: 387

In fact, pastors are the single best hope for setting into motion the movement that will spur the church to accomplish what it should: to make disciples of all people. Churches are to be outposts in the larger world and the places where Christians are taught and trained so they can be useful in making disciples. LOCATION: 418

Our goal is to fill the culture with people who exhibit the character of Christ and influence people the way Jesus did. LOCATION: 436

The New Testament calls Christians not to military conquest but to a divine conspiracy of disciples making other disciples. LOCATION: 456

- First Transition: From Seeking Recognition to Learning to Act Caringly
- Second Transition: From Focusing on Me to Focusing on Others
- Third Transition: From Valuing Numbers to Valuing the End Result
- Fourth Transition: From Leading from the Outside to Leading from the Inside LOCATION: 593

Nothing will test your faith more than to pray and then sit back and wait for God to act. LOCATION: 631

I don't think Christian leaders can be happy until they release control of what they lead. LOCATION: 636

Good leaders do not control people; we serve and inspire them. The best leaders are also the best followers. They have learned submission, vulnerability, humility, and the power of fitting into a community. The greatest Christian leaders are those whose primary focus is following Christ. LOCATION: 672

One of my favorite Peterson books is *Subversive Spirituality*, a collection of essays that would shake even the most confident of secular leaders. Peterson calls for all pastors to strive to be irrelevant and unnecessary. He considers a pastor's job to be modest in nature and mundane in execution. Pastors are not important to the secular community, but in the kingdom of God, they are crucial. They are to pay attention to what God is doing and point it out to their congregations. LOCATION: 999

Discipleship has broken down because we haven't been using Jesus as our model for leadership and done what he did or what he taught. Replication was a crucial part of Jesus' worldview. Jesus invested a lot of time in his followers. He patiently guided, chided, instructed, and showed them how to do ministry. There was tension and challenge in the relationship, but he loved them and gave them his best. His plan to make disciples depended on those disciples making other disciples. If his disciples were not able to release more disciples into mission, then this prayer in the garden was the end of the line. Much of our contemporary discipleship has lacked this relational commitment to spend time together outside of meetings and to live together in community. LOCATION: 1190

Sadly, too many Christian leaders are enamored with their own importance, intelligence, and skills. They are preoccupied with being treated properly both at work and in social situations. LOCATION: 1212

HUMILITY DOES NOT come naturally to us. What's natural is treating ourselves in the most generous way possible. LOCATION: 1267

I propose that for the Christian leader, humility is sacrificing or lowering oneself for the benefit of others. It is contentment and joy when you are not the focus, when you are overlooked, when no rewards are being passed

out. LOCATION: 1344

Just as we intentionally select our clothes and put them on every day, so we are to don humility every day. Peter spoke of our humility in relation to others. A character trait is useful only when it is testable in relation to others. LOCATION: 1377

The decision to be humble is a lifelong one, much like deciding to follow Christ. But as in following Christ, every day is a series of choices. And those choices create something called character. C. S. Lewis wrote, "Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you . . . into something a little different from what it was before. . . . Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other. . . either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature." LOCATION: 1388

The most difficult time for me as a pastor was the time period on a Sunday morning, when the size of crowd had yet to be determined. This time period began fifteen minutes before a service and lasted for fifteen minutes into the service. Afterward, it was a good or bad Sunday, based on attendance. Crowd size didn't just define me, it owned me. I am not alone in this. Crowd size is the most powerful emotional aphrodisiac for a speaker. LOCATION: 1427

Great Christian leaders help people see the world the way God sees it: broken. LOCATION: 1816

It is easy to compromise in small ways that don't seem to matter, but indeed they do, because small things are indicative of character. If a leader does not stand against the small evils, he or she is less likely to do so in the big moments. LOCATION: 1945

In our day, evil has been airbrushed and we have become desensitized to it, so we let it go. LOCATION: 1949

Of all the leaders in America, the most important are pastors. They are the last group of cultural teachers that remain a force for good. They are not strapped with limitations of government; they still have the freedom to teach and to act without restraint. For these three hundred thousand men and women in this country, this is a Bonhoeffer moment. It is time to step up and speak out, to commit their lives and people to a life of discipleship. For as Bonhoeffer said himself, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die." That is sacrificial leadership. LOCATION: 1957

The risk of success not only involves the unholy trinity of money, sex, and power; it also includes the danger of living a religious life with no power. There is nothing quite so odious. Jesus taught that being open and honest were keys to knowing God. Religion, however, tends to make people closed and dishonest. The Pharisees were religious but had no power. Jesus wasn't religious, but he had all the power. Jesus had no political power; the Pharisees had nothing but political power. Jesus scolded them for hypocrisy. LOCATION: 1998

Christian leadership calls for authentic living. It requires humility, service, vulnerability, sacrificial living, and the willingness to put up with a constant stream of abuse. Sometimes that abuse and criticism can be mere street noise, but other times it is a jackhammer in your head. The Christian leader is called to receive criticism in humility, to learn from it, to admit one's faults, and to not seek revenge. An argument can be made that any sensible person would not choose to be a Christian leader. LOCATION: 2252

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.