

# servant leadership in healthcare

John Greenall introduces our new leadership series

**L**eadership. Ah, how we love that word. When I was at medical school, 'medical leadership' was being talked about more and more. Now it's likely you will be having leadership lectures, doing Service Improvement Projects as student selected components, and are able to quote vast reams of leadership theory (well, maybe not).

As a trainee I was placed on a leadership programme and funded to do a module in 'Leadership in Clinical Contexts'. I learnt how 'leading up' as a junior and then middle grade could bring about tangible changes in my working environment (including more cups of tea for F1s - yes, really!).

**'I want to lead people, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be all that they have been made to be. I want to see hearts changed, and God glorified.'**

CMF Student in Zimbabwe

After graduation you will have a leadership component to assessments and appraisals. The UK government recognises that the NHS increasingly needs practising medics to bring clinical experience to leadership roles. The Healthcare Leadership

Model<sup>1</sup> with its nine dimensions is now overseen by the NHS Leadership Academy,<sup>2</sup> which also oversees numerous programmes and resources. The concept of Clinical Leadership is here to stay.

Many of the principles are evidence-based and often common sense. As Christians we affirm the need for good leadership, for example to steward resources well and to encourage and motivate a demoralised workforce.

## a crisis of leadership

Yet despite this, we face a crisis of leadership in our nation and the NHS. What is it about secular leadership principles that are failing? Is it possible that as medical and nursing students you have a role to play, not just in the future but now? Could it be that counter-cultural leadership as modelled by Jesus himself is more relevant today than ever before?

This series on leadership isn't going to answer the question 'Am I a leader?' It isn't going to provide a blow by blow account of what leadership is and how you can improve - to do that we'd need a whole edition of *Nucleus*.

But it is going to do something pretty exciting. Because as Christians in healthcare, we will have opportunities to influence people and systems on multiple occasions. At different times we may be in



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the position of leadership in a CU or CMF group, a ward round or a teaching session.

### students are called to be leaders

If you've read this far it may be an indication that you already know you are called to be a leader. Indeed, the Bible is clear that aspiring to leadership is an honourable ambition.<sup>3</sup>

And yet, real leaders are in short supply. I am grieved by the number of students I see who abdicate the responsibility (and sheer joy) of being a leader – students who think it will come when they've graduated and 'grown up a bit'. My friends in CMF Zimbabwe sense an urgency to be a medical movement that will change their country and see many people come to Christ. There are 19 and 20-year-olds who speak, write, influence and pray fervently for their nation. As a result, they are breeding leaders – leaders of passion, of godliness, and who are grounded in scripture.

I believe God is calling students, perhaps you, to step up to the biblical school of leadership. Not because it is a calling with status, power and promotion, as endorsed in the secular world (indeed in God's economy it will often mean isolation, being misunderstood and marginalised). But because you are thrilled by Jesus and you want to lead others to be all they have been created to be.<sup>4</sup>

### a leadership manual

At the heart of this series is the simple, yet profound, truth that the Bible is the best leadership manual. That all scripture is useful for 'teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness'.

<sup>5</sup> That it lays out social, moral, mental, domestic qualifications for leadership.<sup>6</sup> That it is alive with examples and warnings which a wise leader will learn from. That it teaches that leadership includes being goal-oriented, optimistic, zealous, self-controlled, energetic, tactful, visionary, persevering, prayerful, resting in God and relying on his power working in us.<sup>7</sup>

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Think of someone you would classify as a 'Godly leader' (if possible, who is a medic). What is it about them that stands out? If leadership is really 'caught' and not 'taught', how will you catch all you can?
- 'The best leaders have learnt to submit to and be led by others' – where and whom can you practice following well?
- If you are not teachable and instead believe you have everything figured out, you will never lead effectively<sup>8</sup> – examine your heart and pray that God would give you a love for His Word and a teachable heart?

### hard to believe?

If you're anything like me, with a wave of attractive, evidence-based leadership theories in our secular environment, the supremacy of the Bible for leadership might be hard to believe.

So this is at the heart of what we are doing here. Can we be so gripped by Jesus that our whole lives, our view of leadership included, flow out of a relationship with him? Will our attitude to authority, the oppressed and overload in our work be Christ-like? Will we see that the pitfalls of leadership, including money, sex and power, are all powerfully addressed in Scripture with even better promises?

I can't wait to get going... ■

*If you read – start with Spiritual Leadership by J. Oswald Sanders – a rip-roaring classic and the best I have read on leadership.*

#### REFERENCES

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| 1. Healthcare Leadership Model. <a href="http://bit.ly/2gsmWUV">bit.ly/2gsmWUV</a> | 7. Philippians 3:13; Hebrews 6:9; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Corinthians 9:25; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 5:16; Galatians 6:9; Colossians 4:5-6; |
| 2. NHS Leadership Academy. <a href="http://bit.ly/1k4xgXm">bit.ly/1k4xgXm</a>      | 2 Kings 6:15-17; Galatians 6:9; Luke 5:16; Psalm 127:1-2 Colossians 1:29  |
| 3. 1 Timothy 3:1   | 8. Proverbs 1:8, 8:32   |
| 4. Ephesians 2:10  |   |
| 5. 2 Timothy 3:16-17   |   |
| 6. 1 Timothy 3:2-7; 1 Peter 5:1-7  |   |