

# **A Roadmap for American Churches and People of Faith: W.W.J.D. (What Would Jesus Do?)**



**Bill Marianes**  
Stewardship Calling

## CHAPTER 3. What is Leadership?

### Every Parish Problem Is A Leadership Problem.

You read that right. I firmly believe that every parish problem is a leadership problem. This is true even if you think it is a process, program, system, or team failure. I submit that any problem results from a leader failing to lead in the most effective manner possible. In other words, if you think you have a problem other than leadership, think again.

At this point, someone usually rejects my position by citing uncontrolled acts of nature (notice I will not refer to them as “acts of God”). Yet best-in-class leadership anticipates possibilities and has contingency plans in place. When the U.S. government shuttered churches (improperly, in my opinion) during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, you might ask how a leader is responsible for such a thing. Leaders might not be responsible for being forced to close, but they are accountable for having a contingency plan for any time their parish is required to close its doors. I would add that the failure of Christian churches and jurisdictions generally to have effective lobbying and litigation strategies explains why churches were forced to close but not liquor stores! Preparedness extends to all lawful means to fulfill your WHY and Mission.

Nevertheless, some parishes I work with in Florida never skipped a beat when they were forced to close and shifted everything online seamlessly. This is because they had contingency plans for hurricanes or other closure events. The best leaders are constantly scanning the horizon, identifying any possible threat or opportunity, and building contingency plans ready to go in any such case.

If your parish struggles with something, the leaders have not prepared or appropriately responded. However, even if you have the wrong or unprepared leaders, you must ascertain if they can be trained to lead better or need to be replaced. I am not suggesting you kick ineffective leaders out of the parish. We lovingly work with, and for, all parishioners whom God has entrusted to us.

However, some individuals might not have the God-given gifts or ability to be trained and thus must transition merely out of parish leadership positions they cannot execute. There is undoubtedly another ministry or task to which their gifts are better suited. They may even be great managers if they are not great leaders. (More on that distinction later.) Nevertheless, a great leader helps make smooth transitions in leadership teams when it is in the best interest of the parish. It is sometimes challenging to do, but great leaders lead.

The best leaders ensure they have exigency plans to deal with any people, processes, programs, systems, teams, or external challenges. Additionally, timely course corrections are the hallmark of great leaders so that the ramifications of any adverse event are diminished or not felt. If you are a parish leader and do not have the necessary contingency plans or make the necessary course corrections, then your absence of effective leadership is part of the problem, and you should seek assistance or training.

I do not mean to start with a negative tone; I merely mean to elevate the importance of leadership to the top of all parish leaders' minds. I also want to help you begin a heartfelt assessment if you are part of the problem. The most effective leaders I have known or seen always surrounded themselves with the best and brightest people they could find. Thus, when I was blessed to lead a law firm office, department or team, or a non-profit Board or team, my first objective was to recruit people smarter and more capable than me who had skills I did not possess so we could have a leadership team worthy of those we led. I have discovered that better intellect, wiser judgment, and more significant experience never threaten the best leaders. Instead, they relish those relationships and flourish by getting better themselves through learning from others' greater gifts.

### Leaders Surround Themselves With Better Iron Workers.

UCLA Basketball coach John Wooden won 10 NCAA Championships in 12 years, including one stretch of seven in a row. He was undoubtedly the best men's college basketball coach. He had great life and leadership lessons he imparted to all his players. I have embraced many of them in my own life with excellent results. Among Coach Wooden's philosophies was his belief that "Whatever you do in life, surround yourself with smart people who'll argue with you." He borrowed this philosophy of excellence from the Holy Scripture, discussing iron sharpening iron when struck together (Proverbs 27:17).

I'll never forget someone who observed a "spirited discussion" with one of the smarter and better people I surrounded myself with. After listening to 30 minutes of a vociferous debate, the observer admitted to finally realizing that the two of us loved each other and were committed to helping each other become better through learning. As we will learn later in my Roadmap, when we explore the elements of effective leadership and how to overcome dysfunctions within organizations and teams, you should not fear, and indeed seek, "productive" disagreement and conflict.

The better and the smarter the people around you, the better and more intelligent you will become (if you pay attention and learn not to resist). Commonly attributed to motivational speaker Jim Rohn is the conclusion that individuals who surrounded themselves with people who were more intelligent and better than themselves experienced a 15% increase in their performance. In contrast, those who surrounded themselves with poor performers saw their performance drop by as much as 30%.

Think about who is in your inner circle. Do not dump your friends. But always seek to upgrade your teachers, mentors, and fellow "iron sharpening iron workers." There is never an end to your leadership and learning journey on earth, just as there is never an end to your journey to theosis.

Good character and habits develop trust, and trust is an essential ingredient for leadership. Indeed, as will be discussed later, trust is at the foundation of all effective leadership. People can tolerate a mistake or two (especially when acknowledged with humility) but will not accept a loss of trust and confidence and still consider you a leader.

If you have any problems, challenges, or issues in your parish or ministries, you have a leadership problem. And perhaps that problem includes your leadership training, skills, and practices.

### “Lead, Follow, Or Get Out Of The Way.”

The above quote is one of my favorites and was always plastered on my wall and used in all my Igniting the Flame live retreats. It is commonly attributed to Thomas Paine (with little evidence that he said it). It is often publicly repeated in more “colorful” terms by General George Patton (“We herd sheep, we drive cattle, we lead people. Lead me, follow me, or get the hell out of my way.”) And the most famous modern advocate of this axiom was the visionary and inspirational leader, Ted Turner, who founded and owned Turner Broadcasting, WTBS, CNN, CNN Headline News, TNT, Cartoon Channel, Turner Classic Movies, Atlanta Braves, Atlanta Hawks, Atlanta Chiefs, and the MGM/UA Entertainment Company Library of over 4,000 films.

In the interest of full disclosure, Mr. Turner was a client of my law firm, and I was blessed to represent many of his ventures. On the front of his desk, he had prominently two signs that said, “Either lead, follow, or get out of the way.” Not one, but two. More interestingly, they did not face him. They faced whoever entered his office. This dynamic leader was challenging anyone who entered his domain to embrace his bias for leadership action or followership loyalty.

This willingness to teach everyone how to lead transformationally was one of the many things I admired about him. When Mr. Turner told us we were going to start a Headline News Service before the date a competitor announced they were going on the air, most of us were dumbfounded. What is a Headline News Service? How can we possibly hire the necessary on-air talent in such a short time with such limited resources? How can we get satellite transponders, studios, and other equipment in place to do this 24/7/365? Who is going to carry the feed?

There were countless questions we all took turns asking. The answer was always the same. Either lead, follow, or get out of the way. And this rag-tag assembled team did lead. And in December 1981, only six months after I had started lawyering, CNN Headline News went on the air. I remember often sitting in Executive Vice President Burt Reinhardt’s office (right off the studio), where he simultaneously monitored four televisions with the competitors’ live content and the CNN Headline News on-air feed and paid attention to my advice and questions. Occasionally, Burt would fly out of his chair to correct something going over the air live. Heady times. However, Ted Turner’s visionary and transformational leadership inspired those around him to lead and follow. (And yes, as a lawyer, I had to help get some folks “out of the way” who did not understand the WHY, Mission, and Vision).

## Superman Is A Myth.

Notwithstanding the enormous reputations of visionary, larger-than-life military or business figures, Drs. Kouzes and Posner point out in The Leadership Challenge that leaders always mobilize others to act and work hard to achieve shared goals. In this way, they note that “Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Superman and superwomen are myths. To be sure, visionary, transformational leaders can be very inspirational and sometimes seem superhuman. However, leaders cannot perform all the extraordinary actions necessary for achieving transformational goals. Thus, a leader must provide a clarion call to action to “mobilize the troops” and inspire committed followers to accomplish a shared goal that might otherwise seem individually unimaginable. Kouzes and Posner remind us that followers expect their leaders to excite them and bring energy and enthusiasm to the task. But it first begins with a call to action.

## Aristotle & Leadership.

If you are not interested in understanding the development of modern leadership theory, you can skip to the next section. However, you will miss a lot of foundational evolution. Scholars have traced some of the earliest definitions of leadership to Aristotle’s writings. He identified (1) the “*politikos*” focusing on the characteristics of one’s status and power, and (2) “*eudaimonia*” focusing on individuals and groups pursuing the proverbial righteous “life well lived” (Adkins, 1978, p. 299). Under an **Aristotelian Definition**, *politikos* closely relates to some of the “Trait Approach” leadership models of the 1930s (Northouse, 2022, p. 3). Similarly, *eudaimonia* closely aligns with the “Transformational” and “Authentic” leadership models that gained prominence in the 1980s (Northouse, 2022, p. 185).

Aristotle’s leadership teachings focused on “ethical action” as essential in the pursuit of the “highest good” (Adkins, 1978). Aristotle’s concept of the highest good focused on the loftiest possible virtuous purposes or objectives (Kraut, 2022). Thus, the Aristotelian definition of leadership focuses on the leader’s trust and integrity as a catalyst for achieving highly virtuous objectives. Ethics and integrity appear as critical elements in virtually every definition of leadership. Dr. Peter Northouse wrote an essential leadership treatise entitled Leadership Theory and Practice. In it, he devotes an entire chapter to discussing leadership ethics (Northouse, 2022). Some foundational references to leadership ethics trace back to Aristotle (384-322 BC) and his teacher, Plato (427-347 BC) (Northouse, 2022).

## The Leadership Pyramid Inversion.

Regardless of the timelessness of some ancient leadership definitions, new models evolved following specific world events, philosophies, and additional research. For example, the “Authentic Leadership” model arose from the perceived failures of

public and private leaders to maintain the integrity and authenticity demanded of leaders (Northouse, 2022, pp. 221-251). The times often define the leaders.

The historical pyramidal definition of leadership has been inverting throughout the past century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the “Trait Based Leadership” model featured strong and influential leaders at the top of an organizational pyramid (Northouse, 2022, pp. 27-55). This pyramid folded in half with the shared leadership/followership models such as the “Leader-Member Exchange Theory” (Northouse, 2022, pp. 157-184). Eventually, the leadership pyramid completely inverted with some 21<sup>st</sup>-century theories such as “Servant Leadership” (Northouse, 2022, pp. 253-283) and “Inclusive Leadership” (Northouse, 2022, pp. 322-350). The purpose of my Roadmap is not to fully discuss all leadership theories but to use the historical progression to apply the current most relevant leadership model to parishes.

As one can see, modern leadership definitions and models evolved from a “top-down” approach through a “middle-in” period until they achieved an “inverted pyramid” more closely resembling the ancient Aristotelian Definition. This definitional migration follows rapidly changing socio-cultural phenomena, and thus, the leadership model du jour may remain relevant in an ever-changing world.

As the pace of modern life, technological innovation, and globalism increase exponentially, leadership definitions will likely continue to evolve. One scholar identified at least 66 different leadership theory domains (which I will not explore in my Roadmap, so “fear not”) (Dinh et al., 2014, p. 55). Nonetheless, the modern leadership definitions diligently explained by Drs. Northouse, Winston, and Patterson (Northouse, 2022; Winston & Patterson, 2016) remain closely aligned with the ancient Biblical Logos and Aristotelian Definitions to bring order from this definitional chaos. These more recent leadership definitions focus on leaders with integrity and trust, using wisdom and reason to inspire and lead followers to pursue enthusiastically common goals focused on virtuous objectives.

Scholars have commented on the relative dearth of research and discussion of followership. The importance of understanding followers underscores the reality that one cannot be a leader without followers. However, a followership definition should logically follow a leadership definition. In its simplest historical sense, followership is identifying someone joining the quest of another. While followership is the other side of the leadership coin, both sides must be present for the coin to have value. A leader with no followers only leads themself. “If you think you’re a leader and you turn around, and no one is following you, then you’re simply out for a walk” (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, p. 62).

### **The Followership Side Of The Leadership Coin.**

In defining followership, Northouse reverses his leadership definition and focuses on individuals willing to accept a role to achieve some goal or task (Northouse, 2022, p. 353). This straightforward approach aligns with the Aristotelian Definition in its focus on individuals who follow someone with integrity to pursue a critical and virtuous goal. Giardino (2019) identifies these followership characteristics as people who demonstrate

self-directedness, courage, loyalty, judgment, and engagement. Indeed, a greater focus on followership may lead to better overall organizational outcomes than merely focusing on leadership (Kellerman, 2019, p. 45).

## **Position Matters.**

One must understand the distinct roles followers play. Followers who are indentured servants differ fundamentally from charitable organization volunteers or executives pursuing a corporate vision. Differences in personal circumstances, power, and influence change the followership dynamic. Significant scholarship distinguishes between power derived solely from titles and positions in contrast to those who inspire others (Northouse, 2022, p. 12). Lay leaders, clergy, and Bishops should consider this.

Critically, followership is not synonymous with subordination (Chaleff, 2003, p. 15). The difference between business employees and unpaid non-profit parish volunteers exemplifies another dichotomy. The former receives a financial quid pro quo for their followership, whereas the latter does not. Of course, committed business followership can also result from a passionate belief in an organization's WHY and Mission. Conversely, some volunteers may begrudgingly follow instructions of clergy or lay leaders without a commitment to the WHY or Mission of the parish.

Thus, understanding the value proposition and motivations is critical to differentiate the followership observed. The fully committed "all in" mentality of Christ's Apostles exemplifies unparalleled uncompensated followership. I leave it to a theological explanation to explore the question of the degree to which the Apostles were ultimately "compensated" in the Kingdom Eternal and thus motivated by the ultimate purpose.

## **The Leadership "Times They Are A-Changing" (Dylan, 1964).**

Significant shifts in the leadership/followership relationship have occurred throughout history due to geopolitical, technological, and other changes. Two World Wars and critical global events changed the workforce composition and inevitably altered leadership/followership dynamics. For example, married women in the U.S. workforce grew from 5% in 1890 to over 60% in 1990 (Goldin, 1991, p. 741). These external drivers of change similarly impact parishes.

As a result, generational shifts in values and perceptions of leadership and followership occur. Whyte (1956) studied the attitudes of pre-1950s men. He identified those who followed leaders' orders, uprooted their families and relationships, and moved to wherever they were told. In stark contrast, Leinberger and Tucker (1991) interviewed Whyte's original "organizational men" and their adult children. Significant differences in the followership values of the subsequent generation became apparent. This new generation was unwilling to make the same sacrifices as their parents, placed greater importance on discovering meaning in their lives, and did not merely focus on work (Leinberger & Tucker, 1991). This cultural shift helps parish leaders understand that older

parishioners have vastly different volunteerism and ministry engagement attitudes than their children and grandchildren.

Recently, Smith (2021) examined the “five generations” in the current workforce with their differing values. Anderson et al. (2017) researched the differing generational attitudes of followers/employees in Transformational Leadership, Information Processing, Leader-Member Exchange, Authentic Leadership, and Ethical Leadership models. Two of the most studied groups are the Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964).

Research has found that Millennials and Baby Boomers both appreciate challenging and meaningful work (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 256). However, there is a marked contrast between the preference of Millennials to “work to live” rather than Baby Boomers, who supposedly “live to work” (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 255). Further, Millennials do not react as positively to creative approaches like Transformational Leadership (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 248). These attitudinal and workforce shifts caused researchers to conclude leadership theory must adapt and continue to evolve (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 256). This is the key point of this part of my Roadmap. Hopefully, this is a wake-up call for parish leadership to embrace the changing demographics, perspectives, and interpersonal dynamics and adapt their parish leadership approach accordingly.

Similarly, due to the unprecedented disruption of the global SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic, it remains too early to determine if there will be an acceleration in corresponding changes to the leadership/followership dynamic. For example, the United States recently experienced the highest monthly job resignation rates in the last 20 years (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). This disengagement phenomenon has been named “The Great Resignation” (Jiskrova, 2022, p. 525). It is unknown how long this trend will continue and what changes will result in followership roles and relationships in parishes as a result. However, it is safe to assume that parishes, like every other organization, will inevitably feel the impact of such cultural shifts in leadership/followership relationships.

### **Transformational Followership Through Inspirational Leadership.**

Notwithstanding the rapidly changing times, specific leadership approaches can redefine followership relationships and lead to loyalty and excellence. Dynamic followership can arise from a collaborative and empowering leadership style (Hill, 2014). Ed Catmull demonstrated dynamic leadership at Pixar Animation Studios through a dedication to “transformational innovation” and inspiring a form of “collective genius” rather than siloed individual followers working alone (Hill et al., 2014, p.176).

The different followership models at highly innovative companies like Pixar and Google are described as a “paradox of innovation.” This approach allows leadership to empower passionate followers to perform meaningful work (Hill et al., 2014, p. 178). Like Aristotelian philosophy, a fundamental differentiator of this type of followership is the belief that they are “creating a world to which people want to belong” (Hill, 2014).

I respectfully submit that parishes can be one of the best incubators for such environments. Imagine gathering a group of young adults, presenting them with a challenge the parish faces, and cutting them loose to brainstorm and identify solutions. I had the opportunity to do just that with a group of young adults at a parish the night before I presented my live Igniting The Flame program.

The conversation was so electric and engaged that it continued well after midnight when I excused myself for the 6:00 a.m. wake-up call for the next day's retreat. My departure did not stop the creative engagement of these young people Fr. Joseph had gathered as I received several texts with new ideas at 2:00 a.m. and again around 3:00 a.m. Several of those young people changed their plans for Saturday and showed up at my Igniting The Flame program. They then stayed for several hours afterward, continuing to brainstorm ways to address the parish's problems. As it turned out, several had unique and specialized expertise that would be perfect but had never been asked to use it to help their parish.

### [The Leadership / Management / Team Member Continuum.](#)

Now that the brief leadership history lesson is over, let us explore a critical topic: parish leadership. What is the difference between leadership, management, and team members? We start on the most foundational basis, team members (i.e., "ministry members" in parishes). These are the parishioners who perform the necessary ministry or parish tasks. They are the "worker bees" who get the job done and execute all the action steps that must be accomplished to achieve a desired result.

In turn, team/ministry members are organized under "managers." These are the ministry leaders or people running individual programs within your parish and the people parishes hold accountable to achieve whatever the ministry or parish activity is focused on achieving. Often, managers may also be team members executing actions; however, they have the added duty of organizing and overseeing all the team members and ensuring they are working together, with the necessary resources, to achieve the desired end by some deadline.

At the top of the parish pyramid are the leaders. They always include the clergy leading the parish as God has called those faith leaders to tend to His sheep and help the faithful on their journey to theosis and oneness in Christ. Assisting the clergy are another group of leaders (usually elected by their peers) to serve on a "**parish council**" (i.e., directors, vestry, elders, or any of the other many names used to define the ultimate leaders of a parish in American Christian churches). They are the legal Board of Directors, but ultimately, they are called to be "leaders."

The primary job of parish leaders is to fulfill the parish WHY, act consistently with its Core Values, help achieve the Mission, and accomplish its Vision. That is a mouthful that we will unpack, particularly in Chapter 7 of my Roadmap, where I discuss each of these strategic plan elements. However, the parish council leaders (which, in my definition, include the clergy) are ultimately focused on the parish's future and what changes or improvements must be made to get there faithfully. They leave it to the

managers/ministry leaders to lead the teams in performing the necessary tasks. The parish council leaders help provide guidance and support to ensure the managers have the resources to help the parish fulfill its WHY.

At this point, anyone who has served on a parish council is saying, that's not what we do. "We are firemen/firewomen and put out countless parish fires and often make thousands of little decisions as we micromanage every detail of the parish." That may be what parish councils have done, but that is not what they should do. The fact that there is a disconnect between what the leaders should do and what they do is the reason my Roadmap starts with the issue of the first of the **S<sup>3</sup>** challenges, **Servant Leadership**.

Plain and simple, nothing will be optimized in a parish if the leaders don't act like servant leaders. Indeed, suboptimality will reign when leaders micromanage managers who get frustrated and either quit or take it out on team members. When team members get frustrated over micromanagement from above, they complain incessantly until they disappear. As I often jokingly say, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution freed the slaves and the parish volunteers.

Please do not read this as a criticism of the people who are elected to be leaders. For the most part, every such elected parish council leader or clergyman is a fine person motivated by the right instincts and objectives. Indeed, they're so motivated that they take on the thankless job of leading as volunteers with no compensation and are subject to a lot of criticism leveled at them from every direction and for every decision they make.

God bless our volunteer lay leaders and our paid clergy leaders. But note it is upon you as a leader to take the current leadership team (including yourself) from where they are to where they need to be as the best leaders of Christ's exemplary parish and fulfill its inspirational WHY Statement (discussed further in Chapter 8 of my Roadmap). While each parish should have its own WHY Statement, the generic phrase I will use throughout my Roadmap as a possible WHY is "to bring people closer to Christ and each other."

## [So, You Think You Are A Leader?](#)

Current management thought-leaders, Drs. Kouzes and Posner define a leader articulately in several ways (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, 2017). First, they say a leader leads by example. In other words, leadership is not about personality but behavior. This also means a leader will own the parish's WHY and Vision and lead the managers but not manage the team members. This is a significant challenge for most parish councils, who always seem to want to micromanage every aspect of the parish. The best parish council leaders exemplify the key elements of Servant Leadership modeled by our Lord and Saviour and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of my Roadmap.

Proverbs 29:18 reminds you that "*where there is no vision, the people will perish.*" And so, I ask you, as a parish leader, what's the Vision for your parish? Where will your parish be, and what will it look like three to four years from today? Not what does it look like now or what did it look like yesterday. Where are you leading your parish and parishioners? What is it that you hope to accomplish in the next several years? Have

you identified a Vision that is inspirational, visualizable, and catchable? I am talking about creating a future for your parish, not just micromanaging the details of the current ministries and activities. While I will explain this in greater detail in Chapter 8 of my Roadmap, guru of leadership and management Peter Drucker put it articulately when he said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it” (Cohen, 2009). You are the creator of the future of your parish. What will it look like?

## Moving the World From 249 BC To 2025 AD – Using IS, IM, and TL to Find Your Parish’s Promised Land.

Impact is one thing all parish leaders desire. Christianity’s founder, Jesus Christ, boldly challenged His followers to be global transformationalists by making “*disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:10). Yet throughout history, transformational leaders faced rejection. Walt Disney heard a mouse cartoon would scare women. Industrialists told Henry Ford his idea of a car was trash. Colonel Sanders’ chicken recipe was rejected 1009 times. The Beatles were turned down because guitar groups were passe. Before earning a net worth of \$1 billion+, J.K. Rowling’s first Harry Potter book was rejected 12 times (Laroya, 2015). All twelve Apostles were tortured, imprisoned, and martyred before Christ’s Church became the dominant organizational force for good for the last almost 2,000 years.

Key differentiators motivating great leaders include **Intellectual Stimulation** (“**IS**”) (seeing things differently) and **Inspirational Motivation** (“**IM**”) (elevating expectations) (Sosik & Jung, 2018). As far back as 249 BC, mathematician/inventor Archimedes concluded, “*Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world.*” But what are the levers and props (fulcrums) needed to be a parish leader or world changer? I submit one way to look at it is that your parishioners are the levers, and your inspirational parish WHY and Vision are the fulcrum.

Unlocking the impact inherent in your parish teams requires understanding how to motivate and lead them. Among countless leadership models (Northouse, 2022), **Transformational Leadership** (“**TL**”) focuses on having an extraordinary impact (Pawar, 2016). TL is potentially so powerful and effective that the data show it:

- (a) reversed the trends in declining and plateaued churches (Christopherson, 2014),
- (b) provided a direct correlation between improved church scores in the Natural Church Development assessment (Rumley, 2011),
- (c) positively impacted business/financial performance and new product development (Morris-Phillip, 2021; Strukan et al., 2017), and
- (d) enhanced entrepreneurship and performance (Ocak & Ozturk, 2018).

**TL** advocate Burns (1978) introduced modernity to Archimedes world changers by focusing on the first “**DEI**” of **D**eveloping, **E**mpowering, and **I**nspiring people. Decades

later, Bass (1999) identified the research and expansion of **TL**, allowing leaders to quickly move followers up Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs to become "self-actualizers" meeting their potential. Research proves **TL** results in higher levels of human enthusiasm, energy, performance, and results (Pawar, 2016). This leadership style can be helpful when a parish needs to make a more significant transformational change (e.g., moving, merging with another parish, undertaking a massive new building project, etc.).

## **What Is Intellectual Stimulation (IS) & Inspirational Motivation (IM), And How Can You Use It In Your Parish?**

In *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, Sherlock Holmes said he would know what good was when he saw it. Similarly, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart defined "obscenity" by saying he would know it when he saw it (*Jacobellis v. Ohio* 378 U.S. 197). So, how can we recognize **IS & IM** and enhance them in our parishes?

**Intellectual Stimulation** is "innovative, creative, and novel ways of doing the conventional" (Anjali & Anand, 2015, p. 28). **Inspirational Motivation** is a creative, optimistic, encouraging, confident, and transformative environment focused on a clear Vision (Ameen et al., 2021). Using Sosik's and Jung's (2018) Full Range Leadership Development model, I briefly examine several **IS&IM** cultivation techniques and suggestions to unleash the Archimedes global world changers in your parish.

3M scientist Spencer Silver failed to invent a stronger and tougher adhesive. Instead, he discovered microspheres that stuck lightly to surfaces. 3M scientist Art Fry was frustrated when the scraps of paper marking the church hymns he sang kept falling off. Silver and Fry practiced **IS&IM** by partnering to create the now ubiquitous Post-It® notes (3M, n.d.).

Silver's and Fry's failure plus creativity produced a global sticky notes market estimated to be \$2.879 billion by 2028 (Market Insights Plus, 2024). Thus, not every mistake is a failure, and not every failure is unproductive. One key **IS&IM** difference is the perspective of seeing a failure to solve one problem as a solution to another opportunity. In the inevitable and productive operational experimentation that must happen in the best-run parishes, failures should be celebrated and not condemned to ensure thoughtful risk-taking and high levels of parishioners' service remain a priority. Consider the following IS&IM Actions and Steps:

### **IS&IM Action 1. Re-examine Critical Assumptions for Accuracy and Talk Positively About the Future.**

Everyone makes assumptions based on prior experiences and observations. The problem is in blindly adhering to them (sticky notes, pun intended). An **IS&IM** exercise to embrace as part of a **TL** process is regularly scheduled examinations of all significant assumptions and underlying parish strategic decisions assessed against positive future desired outcomes. What is not scheduled is rarely done.

Everyone suffers from confirmation biases, the human tendency to believe/cling

to one's favorite hypothesis/solution (Klayman, 1995). When confirmation biases exist in parishes, we exclude alternatives and creative ideas and adhere to our underlying assumptions and past practices.

Confirmation biases that expand to entire parishes become "Group Think," a psychological drive for consensus in cohesive groups that represses disagreement and prevents examining alternatives (Janus, 1972). Individuals and parishes that consciously practice high **IS&IM** consistently re-examine and reassess their assumptions and biases as they pursue their positive future Vision.

### **IS&IM Action Steps:**

1. Write three current critical assumptions about your parish that are keeping you stuck where you are.
2. Write the positive/lofty future parish Vision you see and the critical assumptions/challenges keeping you from achieving it.
3. Next to each of the Step 1 assumptions, write why they may no longer be true or how they can be overcome.
4. Next to each Step 2 challenge, identify what positive results or consequences will occur when they are overcome and you achieve your Vision.

## **IS&IM Action 2. Seek and Look at Things From Different Perspectives And Articulate A Positive Future Vision.**

Anyone who has argued with their spouse/child/best friend has learned the lesson of seeing things from different perspectives and how they impact opinions. Great leaders capably move between 50,000 feet of motivational **IM** future Vision and the 1-foot **IS** tactics necessary to accomplish it. Pursuing with charisma and enthusiasm an ultimate **TL** ideal future Vision and goals drives behavior (Barnett & McCormick, 2003).

### **IS&IM Action Steps:**

1. Build a consensus Vision among your parish leadership and teams about the brightest most transformational future Vision possible.
2. Write three perspectives that limit your points of view and inhibit achieving your parish's Vision.
3. Identify three people with different perspectives and ask them to tell you what they see about the items in Steps 1 and 2 to challenge your assumptions.

## **IS&IM Action 3. Suggest New Ways To Accomplish Tasks And Exciting Images Of Key Considerations.**

The movie Apollo 13 featured NASA engineers challenged to fit a square air filter into a round slot using what was in the spacecraft to avoid the astronauts' death. (Watch

a clip of this scene: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry55--J4\\_VQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry55--J4_VQ)).

Everyone travels to unknown destinations using a **Global Positioning System** (“**GPS**”), which is a quintessential **IS&IM** story. When Russia’s Sputnik satellite beat the U.S. into space, Johns Hopkins University professors William Guier and George Weiffenbach discovered how to identify Sputnik’s location in space using the Doppler Effect. Thereafter, they were challenged/inspired to reverse the process and determine the location of something moving on earth by pinging a moving satellite (LandAirSea Systems, n.d.).

Future **IM** possibilities from reversing existing processes or examining them from different perspectives allow your parish Archimedes World Changers to discover inspirational new ways to achieve something better.

### **IS&IM Action Steps:**

1. Identify an instance when you/someone in your parish did something different and achieved a better result.
2. Determine the process used to think of that innovative alternative.
3. Identify a significant challenge/need/opportunity in your parish and inspire a team to use the step 2 innovative process to identify creative ways to redeploy/improve existing products/solutions/ideas.

### **IS&IM Action 4. Encourage Creative, Nontraditional, And Aspirational Thinking That Challenges The Status Quo.**

The Holy Gospel discusses iron sharpening iron to mean people can push each other to more significant improvement (Proverbs 27:17). Laying out each automobile part gets you nowhere. However, after assembly, the possibilities of where a vehicle can take you are endless. Nontraditional and aspirational thinking encourages examining things beyond the normal frame of reference, whereas true “devil’s advocacy” is contrarian thinking (Sosik & Jung, 2018).

Using devil’s advocates to challenge ideas/assumptions intentionally helps sharpen them and discover and fix flaws. The Roman Catholic Church uses an “Advocatus Diaboli” (“Devil’s Advocate” a/k/a “Promoter of the Faith”) to argue against the canonization of a potential Saint and thus identify any character flaws (Krautter, 2013). Debaters/lawyers use this technique to strengthen their arguments by identifying challenges to their position and the most effective responses. Great leaders have a devil’s advocate (or two) to help them test and improve their ideas.

The joke “How many Xs does it take to change a lightbulb?” points to stagnant thinking that requires re-examination. Change resistance is among the strongest human tendencies (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). Parish teams often fear that challenging long-held beliefs/practices may have adverse personal or theological consequences. Old ideas and ineffective strategies are rarely revisited without a formal process and permission to speak candidly. I know a decision should be re-examined when someone in a parish tells me, “That’s how we’ve always done it.”

Appropriately challenging current strategies help achieve the critical objectives of inviting fresh thinking, new ideas, alternative viewpoints, creativity, and freedom to imagine a different future by encouraging teams to seek innovative best practices.

### **IS&IM ACTION STEPS:**

1. Identify a “sacred cow” and long-held practice (unrelated to the timeless theology of your faith tradition) and recruit a trusted, knowledgeable team to debate how it is no longer optimal or effective.
2. Discuss changes to the practices consistent with current realities and experiences.
3. Establish a formal process by which others are free to serve as respectful and fervent devil’s advocates to stress-test your ideas and ensure iron sharpens iron.

In short, an amazing Vision is possible through an **IS&IM** process re-examining assumptions while looking at a glorious future from different perspectives, encouraging nontraditional thinking, and reimagining new ways to address your challenges and long-standing practices. Accomplishing lofty objectives does not require recruiting an army of Einsteins. You only need to harness the power of your parish’s existing Archimedes World Changers.

An inspiration to undertake this **IS&IM** journey is encapsulated in this short commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfftHaK9tYY&t=5s> (Jobs, 1997). So, here’s to the round pegs in the square holes Archimedes World Changers that can unleash the power of **IS&IM** and a **TL** process to take your parish to an unimaginably better destination.

## **My Dozen Critical Leadership Principles.**

Anybody can receive a title and be called “leader.” But if you do not act consistently with what it means to be a true leader, then the title will mean nothing, and you won’t have followers. That’s a key part of leadership. As Drs. Kouzes and Posner say clearly: “Leaders don’t decide who leads. Followers do. If you think you’re a leader and you turn around, and no one’s following you, then you’re simply out for a walk” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). I love this because I know so many so-called leaders with titles who are out for a walk and don’t seem to understand that their failure to develop leadership skills puts them in the uncomfortable position they find themselves in.

This concept is difficult for parish council members and parish leaders to embrace. They get so excited about being elected or appointed to serve in a leadership role that they make critical mistakes. These are the top 12 initial significant rules that I ask parish leaders to embrace.

1. God is in charge. He may have allowed you to take the baton for this lap around the track, but remember who you work for and who you belong to. He created you, and one day, if you are lucky, have faith,

and live right, you will be reunited with Him. Never forget He is your boss and entrusted His people to you. Do Him proud and lead to the best of your abilities. Parish work is Godly work. If you do not have the time to prioritize it, do not volunteer or serve.

2. Your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ delivered a master class on leadership training. Just do what He says and follow His lead and example. When in doubt, the answer is always the subtitle for my Roadmap: W.W.J.D. (What Would Jesus Do?).
3. God inspired the Holy Scriptures as your leadership manual. It is all in there. You may have to do some translating, and you will need to bring it into your modern-day context. However, all leadership tools, techniques, and practices you need are in the Holy Scriptures, including the ability to learn from other people's mistakes. Study the Bible intently and for your entire life.
4. Always know your and your parish's WHY and Core Values. Never do anything contrary to either. Remain the staunchest defender of those true North principles that will drive all decisions in your parish. If you don't know why you do what you do, you will have difficulty inspiring others to join you on this difficult journey
5. Titles do not make you a leader. Neither do awards, medals, plaques, or winning elections. Anyone can be given a title or award. Get over yourself and get out of your own way. Practice Christ's humility and stay focused on creating a compelling Vision people are willing to follow, and you too can become a parish leader.
6. You are not God. Stop thinking you are in charge of, and responsible for, everything and everybody. You are not. You will make mistakes. Many mistakes will come from working hard and trying new and creative things. That is fine and good. Just learn from each one and move forward. A former law partner who had been a Navy Seal sent me a two-letter email once when we failed to achieve the desired result. It merely says "**CM**." When I asked him what that meant, he said it was Navy Seal code for "Continue Mission." That is excellent advice for your parish leadership journey. At all times, CM!
7. Do not think what you've learned about leadership in your business or work life translates perfectly to parish leadership. Some of it does. Some of it needs to be adapted, and some is entirely inapplicable. Do not assume what worked in business will work in your parish. Do not assume the opposite, either. Do your homework, gather the research and data, try new things, and adapt. Always drive change. Never assume you are doing things as perfectly as they can be done. Be the change you wish to see.

8. Never think your leadership learning journey is over. It never is and never will be. Keep studying and reading, taking classes, and challenging yourself. Indeed, I tell parish councils to pick 12 leadership books a year and have one parish council member read them thoroughly and prepare a talk about them monthly to help everyone learn. I have been leading lawyers and businesses for 44 years, and when I hit the ripe old age of 68, I enrolled in the Doctorate in Strategic Leadership program, for which my Roadmap is my final work product. I hope to graduate from this program one week after my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, I have already identified the educational classes I need to take next. Lifelong learning is a continuous leadership learning process.
9. Servant Leadership is the most effective form of parish leadership and requires complete submission to the interests and needs of those you serve. They may have elected or appointed you, but all parishioners are now who you serve, not the other way around. Servant Leadership is so critical that it will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of my Roadmap.
10. Dive for loose balls. This was the coaching tip I gave all the young men and women I coached in church league basketball for 15 years. Never let the ball roll off the court without diving to retrieve it. This is another way to apply “Grit” to everything you do in parish leadership. (See the discussion of Dr. Angela Duckworth’s work on GRIT in Chapter 4 of my Roadmap.) You must show continued stamina and effort over long periods
11. The Holy Spirit has your back and was there to guide the Apostles on Pentecost. It remains the gift that keeps on giving from our Lord when he passed back to the Kingdom Eternal. Pray for assistance and seek the wisdom that the Holy Spirit will reveal to you. Remember the Lord’s promise in the Holy Scripture: *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* (Matthew 7:7). This is a promise, so accept the gift of the Holy Spirit and ask for help when you need it. Not to suggest any holy similarity, but even in the Harry Potter series, the omniscient and prescient Headmaster Dumbledore always said, “Help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it” (Rowling, 2002). If that works in a fantasy world, it works in our Christian real world. So, act as if you believe and discover the path toward theosis to lead yourself, your family, and your parishioners closer to Christ and each other.
12. In all you do, give all glory to God!

There is much more to be said about leadership in parishes, so please read on to the subsequent Leadership Chapters 4-8 in my Roadmap.