



# CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS I: THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

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Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Opening reflection  
and discussion:

- Take a few minutes to reflect on your best experience of “Christian leadership”
- Further prompt:
  - What contributed to this good experience?  
(context; personality; competence; team;  
spirituality)
- Discuss your example with a neighbour
- Plenary feedback

# PART I (9:00-10:15)

Introduction to the Seminar

## PART 2 (10:45-12:00)

Contextual challenges to Christian leadership

# PART I (9:00-10:15)

Introduction to the Seminar

## Seminar Sessions:

1. The challenges we face (Monday)

Christian leadership through the lens of:

2. Virtue ethics (Tuesday)

3. Management and psychology (Wednesday)

4. Scripture and tradition (Thursday)

Conclusions:

5. What we have to offer (Friday)

Approach:

- a) Practical and **academic**
- b) Critical and **constructive**
- c) Lecture and **seminar**

# Defining Christian leadership

Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*, 29 & 44.

‘[Christian] leaders of the future ... men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God’s presence, to listen to God’s voice, to look at God’s beauty, to touch God’s incarnate Word and to taste fully God’s infinite goodness.’

‘The leadership about which Jesus speaks is of a radically different kind from the leadership offered by the world. It is a servant leadership ... in which the leader is a vulnerable servant who needs the people as much as they need him or her.’

Kessler & Kretzschmar, 'Christian Leadership as a trans-disciplinary field of study', 2.

'What is "Christian" about Christian Leadership?' When we speak of Christian leadership, we are referring to those leaders who explicitly draw on their faith and Christian worldview. If such leaders develop the skills, competence and moral character required, they could be exemplary leaders. However, simply claiming to be a Christian leader does not mean that such a person will be a better leader. The following definitions are thus suggested: 'A leader is a person whom other persons follow.' And therefore: 'A Christian leader is a person who follows Christ and whom other persons follow.'

Parkinson, *Understanding Christian Leadership*, 47 & 99.

Leadership:

'A relational process of social influence through which people are inspired, enabled and mobilized to act in positive, new ways, towards the achievement of shared goals.'

Christian leadership:

'A relational process of social influence through which people are inspired, enabled and mobilized to act in positive, new ways, towards the achievement of God's purposes.'

# Defining Christian leadership?

Like many of the most important aspects of our lives (consciousness, love, faith), it is very difficult to define exactly and satisfactorily but we know it is important and we recognise it when we see it!

Bekker, Corne J., 'Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership', *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 2:2 (2009): 142-152.

Kessler, V. & Kretzschmar, L., 'Christian Leadership as a trans-disciplinary field of study', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36:1 (2015): 8p.

Kessler & Kretzschmar, 'Christian Leadership as a trans-disciplinary field of study', 1.

'The purpose of this article is to clarify the nature and range of Christian Leadership as a field of study and discuss its interrelationship with other academic disciplines ... It draws on mainly academic articles published in the field of Christian Leadership. However, it appears that there are very few research articles that explicitly discuss the nature of this field of study. Articles on Christian Leadership are written, consciously or unconsciously, from the perspective of one or more academic disciplines.'

Kessler & Kretzschmar, 'Christian Leadership as a trans-disciplinary field of study', 3.

'Christian Leadership is a field of study that usually occurs in one of these three disciplines: Practical Theology, Theological Ethics or Missiology. In addition, other disciplines contribute to the area of Christian Leadership. These include the theological disciplines like Biblical Studies, Systematic Theology and Church History and the non-theological disciplines like Management Sciences, Sociology and Psychology.'

## Seminar Sessions:

1. Introduction: The challenges we face (Monday)

Christian leadership through the lens of:

1. Virtue ethics (Tuesday)

2. Management and psychology (Wednesday)

3. Scripture and Tradition (Thursday)

4. Conclusions: What we have to offer (Friday)

Bekker, 'Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership'.

'This brief reflection serves to highlight some of the recent developments in the scholarly efforts to define Christian Leadership.'

Bekker, 'Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership'.

- (a) studies of leadership approaches of biblical characters
- (b) historical, sociological, and contextual descriptions
- (c) studies of historical Christian figures
- (d) ethical explorations
- (e) cross-faith comparative analysis
- (f) formational process descriptions
- (g) comparisons with leadership and management theories
- (h) exegetical studies
- (i) attempts at a proto-theory

**Table 1. Emerging Descriptive and Theoretical Approaches to Christian Leadership**

Engstrom (1976)	Clark (1992, 1998)	Kretzschmar (2002, 2007)	Whittington et al. (2005)	Bekker (2006)	Ayers (2006)	Niewold (2007)
"Personal traits of Christian leaders"	"Paul's model of leadership"	"Moral leadership: A Christian-ethical analysis"	"Legacy leadership of the Apostle Paul"	"Mimetic Christological model of Christian leadership"	"A theology of leadership"	"Martyrological (witness-based) model of Christian leadership"
Desire for achievement	Mimetic	Intellectual conversion	Worthy of imitation	Mimetic	Idealized influence	Expansionist
Acceptance of authority	Christological	Affective conversion	Boldness amid opposition	Kenotic	Inspirational motivation	Self-referential
Self-discipline		Volitional conversion	Pure motive	Servant posturing	Intellectual stimulation	Transformational
Creativity		Relational conversion	Influence without asserting authority	Embracing humanity	Individualized consideration	Public witness
Delegation		Moral action	Affectionate & emotional	Active humility		Vocational habitude
Decisiveness			Vulnerable & transparent	Missional obedience		
Persistence			Authentic and sincere			
Balanced Life			Active, not passive			
Faith & prayer			Follower-centered, not self-centered			
			Changed lives			

Bekker, 'Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership'.

(a) ...

(b) ...

(c) ...

(d) ethical explorations

(e) ...

(f) formational process descriptions

(g) ...

(h) ...

(i) ...

TUESDAY

Bekker, 'Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership'.

(a) ...

(b) historical, sociological, and contextual descriptions

(c) ...

(d) ...

(e) ...

(f) ...

(g) comparisons with leadership and management theories

(h) ...

(i) ...

WEDNESDAY

Bekker, 'Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership'.

(a) studies of leadership approaches of biblical characters

(b) ...

(c) studies of historical Christian figures

(d) ...

(e) ...

(f) ...

(g) ...

(h) exegetical studies

(i) ...

THURSDAY

# MY EXPERIENCE IN (TEACHING) CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Moving on to your experience in Christian leadership



**Serving the Oxford postgraduate  
community and, through them,  
the world**

[Find out more](#)

# About

The Oxford Pastorate is a Christian charity, an historic Anglican chaplaincy that has been serving Oxford University students since 1893. We now focus on the remarkable postgraduate and research community. Our work encompasses welcome and pastoral care, and conversations around the big questions of life and faith. We also conduct academic research, including projects centred on character, leadership, and the common good.







The Oxford  
Character  
Project

MENU ☰

# A new generation of wise thinkers & good leaders

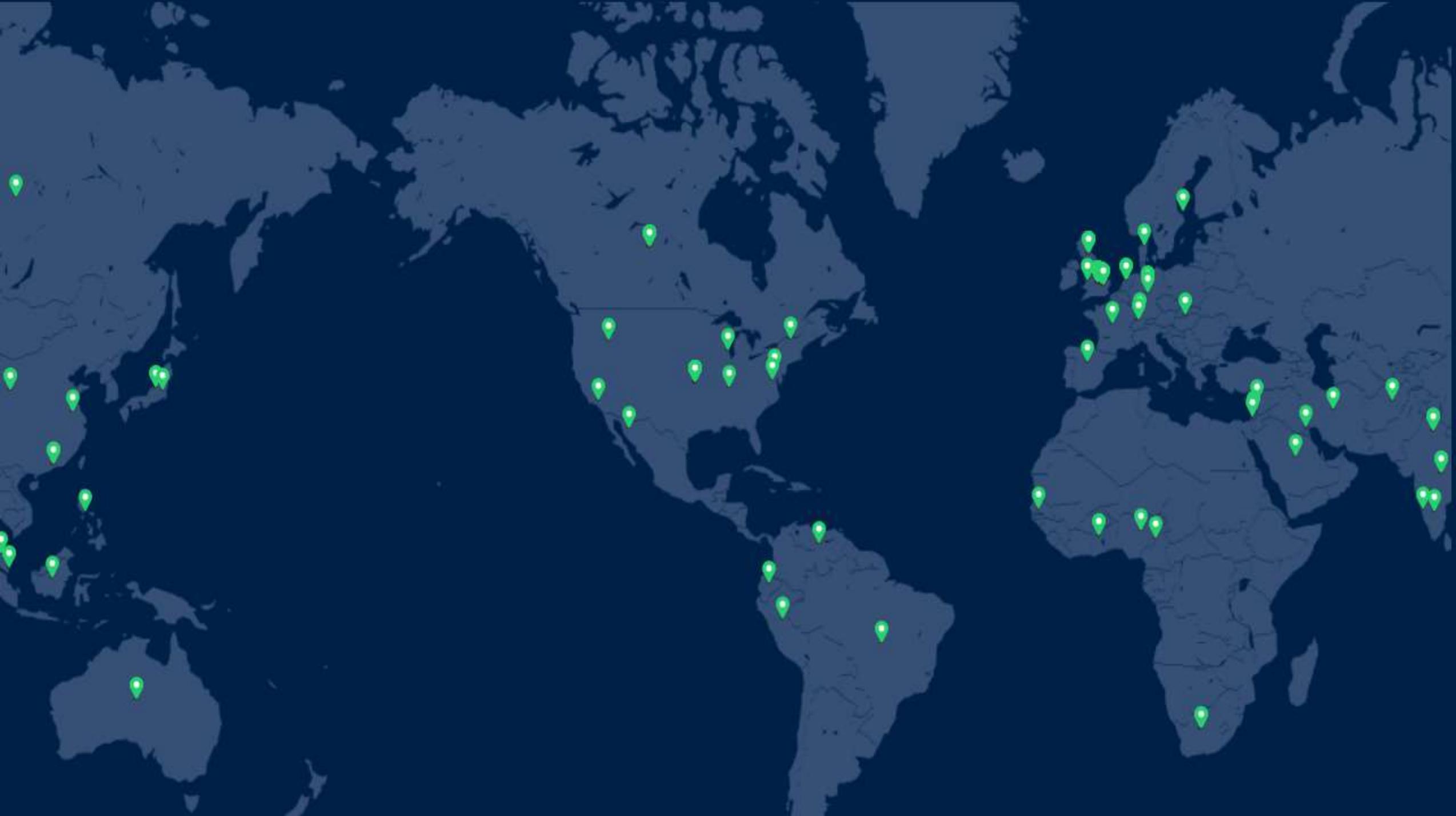
Character is at the heart of what it means to be human. We champion good character for responsible leadership that helps individuals and organisations to flourish.

ABOUT US

# About

The Oxford Character Project is an interdisciplinary initiative at the University of Oxford, dedicated to the cultivation of character and responsible leadership. We join cutting edge industry research with the design and delivery of character and leadership development programmes, industry reports and academic resources.





Kessler & Kretzschmar, 'Christian Leadership as a trans-disciplinary field of study', 5.

“We are interested in research on Church Leadership because we want to improve current church leadership, we want to support Christians who take the risk of moving ahead [in leadership], and thus, we want to contribute to the welfare of both the church and society.”

Parkinson,  
*Understanding Christian  
Leadership*, 130.

‘One of the most compelling reasons for embracing the idea of leadership and of exercising it in an intentional fashion is that if we fail to do so we may be found to be exercising an implicit leadership but in an unreflective, ill considered and thus potentially dangerous fashion. Those who occupy positions of responsibility in churches or in any other organization inevitably exercise leadership and are followed by others ... The more we reflect on what we are doing, and the more we seek to bring this into conformity with the pattern of ministry and leadership we see modelled by Jesus, the safer we will be as leaders and the better able we will be to fulfil our calling.’

Closing discussion:

What is your experience in Christian leadership?

What drew you to this seminar?

What are the most pressing questions about Christian leadership for you?

## PART 2 (10:45-12:00)

Contextual challenges to Christian leadership

# CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

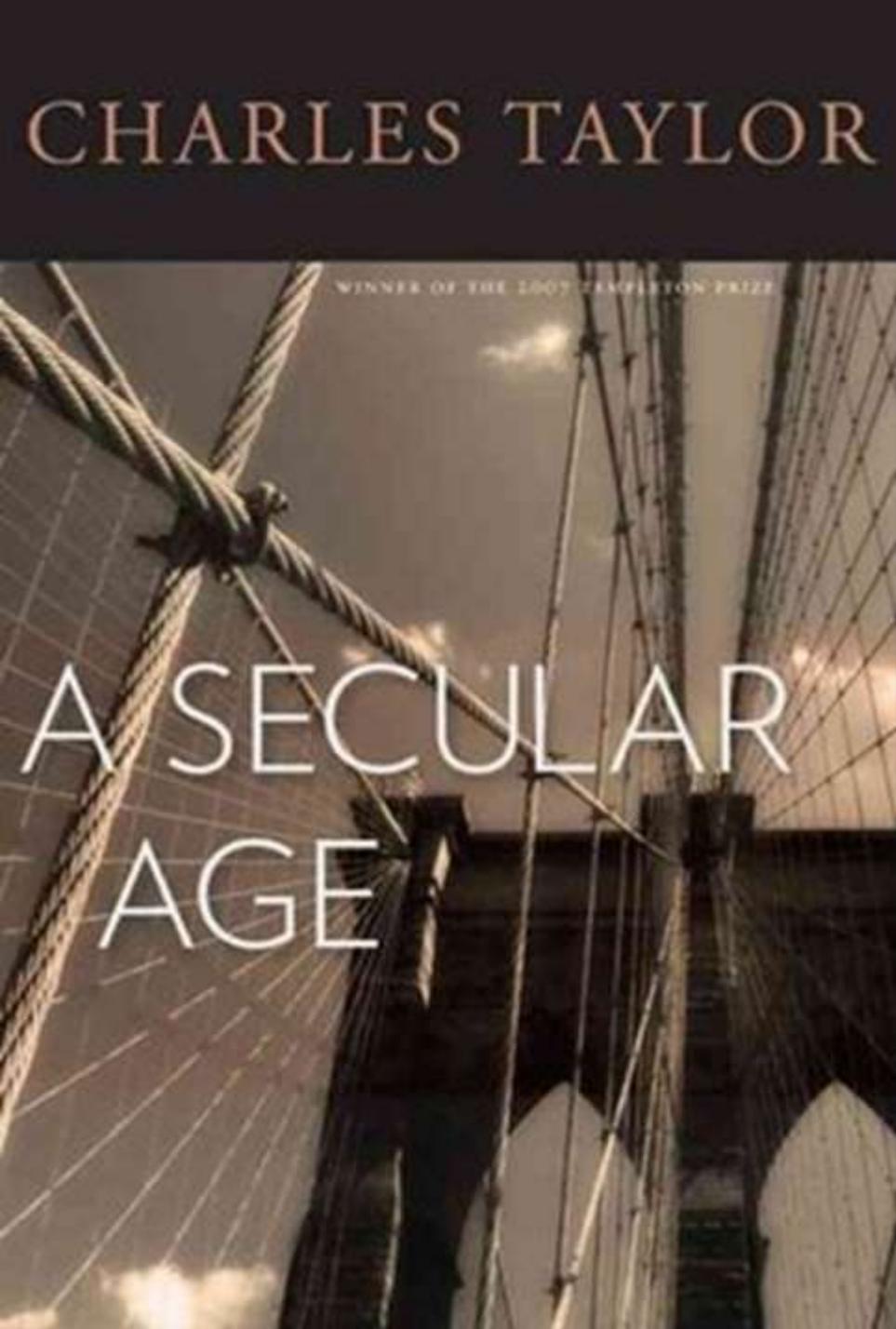
The contextual challenges to Christian leadership:  
(At least in Oxford / UK)

1. Society lacks the very conditions for belief  
*A Secular Age* by Charles Taylor
2. We have forfeited trust  
*Spotlight & Bleeding for Jesus*
3. We are no longer radically distinctive  
*Dominion* by Tom Holland
4. The temptation to be “spectacular”  
*The Way of Jesus* by Henri Nouwen

CHARLES TAYLOR

WINNER OF THE 2007 TEMPLETON PRIZE

# A SECULAR AGE



‘Why was it virtually impossible not to believe in God in, say, 1500 in our Western society, while in 2000 many of us find it not only easy, but also even inescapable?’

Taylor's question puts him on the terrain of "secularization theory" – a long-held thesis that hypothesized that religious belief would decrease as modernity progressed. Such prognostication has not proven to be true, so most debates about secularization have been wrangling about empirical data regarding rates of religious belief, etc. Taylor is not playing that game because he thinks it's misguided and misses the point. Such debates are still focused on beliefs, whereas Taylor thinks the essence of "the secular" is a matter of believability. Secularization theorists (and their opponents) are barking up the wrong tree precisely because they fixate on expressions of belief rather than conditions of belief.

James KA Smith, *How Not to Be Secular*, 20.

**Secular1** A more “classical” definition of the secular, as distinguished from the sacred – the earthly plane of domestic life. Priests tend the sacred; butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers carry out “secular” work.

**Secular2** A more “modern” definition of the secular as “areligious” – neutral, unbiased, “objective” – as in a “secular” public square.

**Secular3** Taylor’s notion of the secular as an age of contested belief, where religious belief is no longer axiomatic. It’s possible to imagine not believing in God.

*Taylor, A Secular Age, 3.*

A move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace.

[...]

From a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others.

The challenge:

Belief is fragile, no longer easy, stable or sticky

Christian leaders no longer command respect and trust as a result of shared belief

Society lacks the very conditions of belief and simply can't understand "Christian" leadership as anything other than one more political or identity position

MARK RUFFALO  
MICHAEL KEATON  
RACHEL McADAMS  
LIEV SCHREIBER  
JOHN SLATTERY  
STANLEY TUCCI

# SPOTLIGHT

BREAK THE STORY. BREAK THE SILENCE.



THE TRUE STORY BEHIND THE SCANDAL THAT SHOOK THE WORLD.

OPEN ROAD FILMS presents in association with PARTICIPANT MEDIA and FIRST LOOK ANIMATION ANONYMOUS CONTENT and JACKSON/TANZI production SPOTLIGHT MARK RUFFALO MICHAEL KEATON RACHEL McADAMS LIEV SCHREIBER JOHN SLATTERY and STANLEY TUCCI WRITTEN BY ALBERT SARGENT and PAUL SCARNE PRODUCED BY HOWARD GROSS DIRECTED BY TOM MCCARTHY COSTUME DESIGNER TOM McCARROLL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STEPHEN CHARTER PRODUCED BY JEFF SKILL JONATHAN KING PIERRE JONATHAN MICHAEL DEERMAN DAVID TORRES TOM DUTCHEROS PETER LAWSON JAMES MARCHAND EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHAEL HUSAN STEVE SOLOM MICHAEL DENTON BYE EASON PASTI

Participant Media FIRST LOOK ANONYMOUS R OPEN ROAD

VENICE FILM FESTIVAL IN THEATERS THIS NOVEMBER TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL

*Spotlight* (dir. Tom McCarthy, 2015)

Oscar for Best Picture  
Oscar Best Original Screenplay

two, it continued with four 17-year olds; on the bare bottom  
use it leaves less evidence)"but was voluntarily accepted as  
asturbation. Beatings varied from a dozen to 40 strokes. (I  
ures I quote what they have told me, in every case taking the  
s were technically all criminal offences under the Offences  
of 1861, Sec.47.

# BLEEDING FOR JESUS

re always seen as good by operators and participants - the  
young Christian men, and the blessings of fatherly discipli  
but cannot really understand it. Prayer, praise and loving  
ern in Christ's name were evident at every point. There was  
evidence of overt sexual excitement or interference. But th  
cribes it as suppressed masochistic sexual activity (or su  
ne operator).

## John Smyth and the cult of Iwerne camps

severity of the practice was horrific. Five of the 13 I hav  
y for a short time. Between them they had 12 beatings and  
The other 8 received about 14,000 strokes; 2 of them having  
over the three years. The others were involved for one  
spoke of bleeding on most occasions ('I could feel'  
my legs' - 'I was bleeding for 3½ weeks'  
ng'). I have seen bruised and scored  
ne beating. Beatings of 100 str  
strokes for some undiscipli



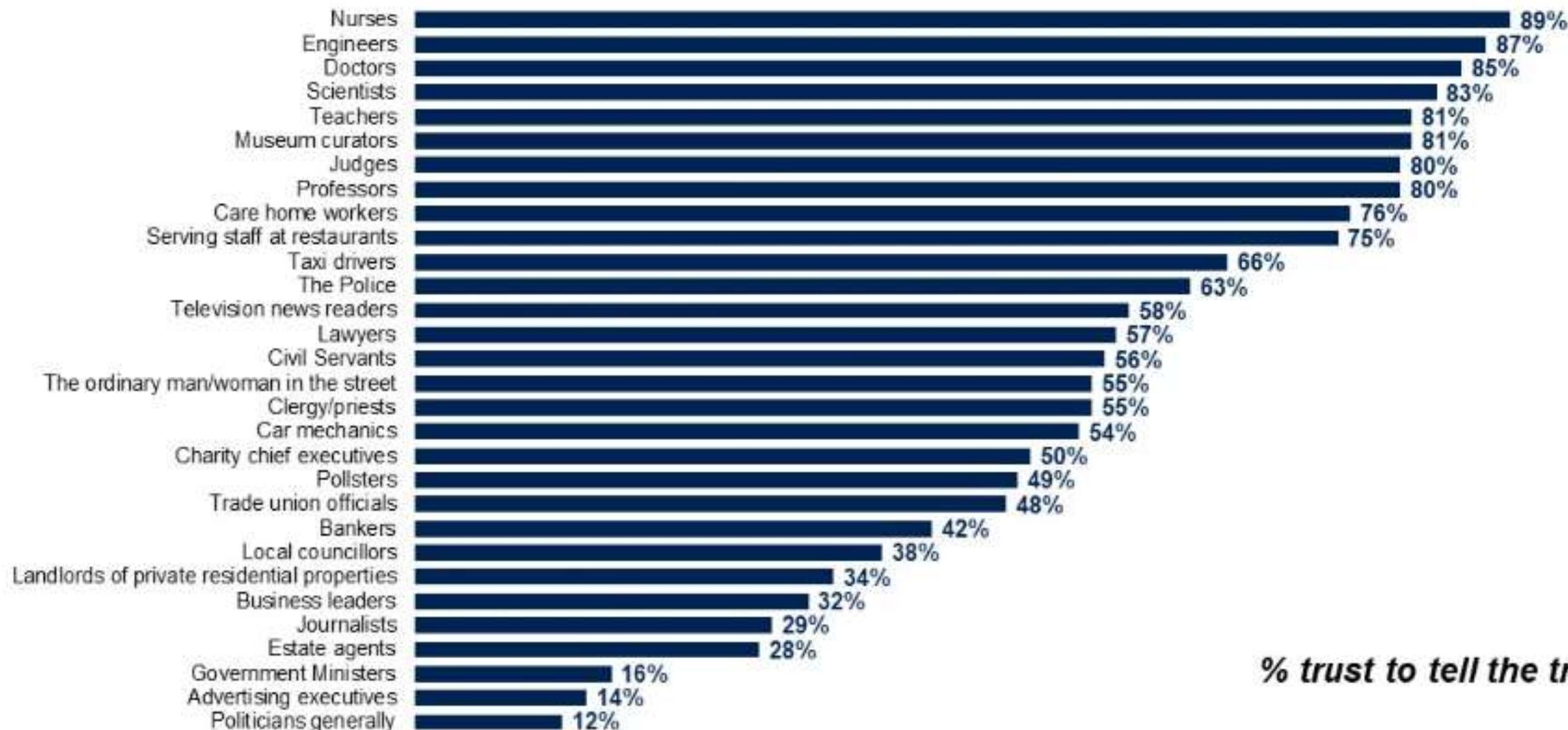
## ANDREW GRAYSTONE

There was  
d making a  
pressure, and then one of the persons came along for the  
ed that the list should be shared. Then there would be men  
to be had through this system and a fair amount of pressure  
the best, don't you? Let me be a helper to you ...") and  
visit. At this stage the beating was often thought of as 'i

*Bleeding for Jesus* by Andrew Graystone  
Published 2021  
Response still awaited

# Veracity Index 2022 – all professions

*“Now I will read you a list of different types of people. For each would you tell me if you generally trust them to tell the truth, or not?”*



**% trust to tell the truth**

Base: 1,005 and 1,004 British adults aged 16+, interviewed by telephone 19 – 26 October and 26 October – 1 November

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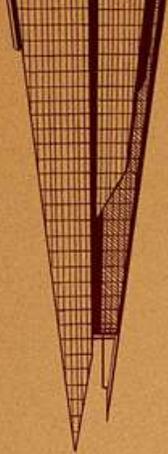


The result is not, as we once imagined, a secular society. It is a pagan society, and its paganism, having been born out of the rejection of Christianity, is far more resistant to the gospel [and to Christian leadership] than the pre-Christian paganism with which cross-cultural missions have been familiar. Here, surely, is the most challenging missionary frontier of our time.

Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 20.

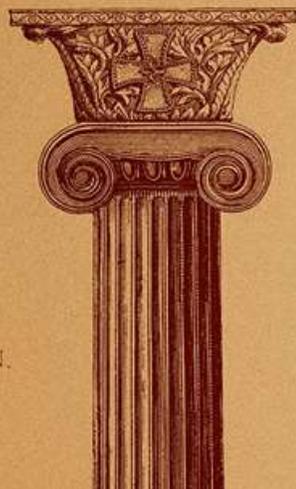
The challenge:

Until we prove ourselves,  
Christian leaders are  
suspect not trusted



TOM  
HOLLAND  
DOMINI<sup>+</sup>ON<sup>+</sup>

The Making of the Western Mind



'Terrific: bold,  
ambitious and  
passionate'  
PETER FRANKOPAN,  
AUTHOR OF  
*THE SILK ROADS*

*SUNDAY TIMES*  
BESTSELLING  
AUTHOR OF  
*RUBICON*

*Dominion* by Tom Holland

Dominion tells the epic story of how those in the West came to be what they are, and why they think the way they do ... **it explores why, in a society that has become increasingly doubtful of religion's claims, so many of its instincts remain irredeemably Christian.** It demonstrates just how novel and uncanny Christian teachings were when they first appeared in the world; and why the West, and all it today takes for granted, is similarly strange in consequence. Even the increasing numbers in the West who have now abandoned the faith of their forebears and **dismiss all religion as pointless superstition remain recognisably its heirs.** Christianity's enduring impact is not confined to churches. It can be seen everywhere in the West: in science, in secularism, in gay rights, even in atheism.

(From cover blurb)

The more years I spent immersed in the study of classical antiquity, the more alien I increasingly found it. The values of Leonidas, whose people had practised a peculiarly murderous form of eugenics and trained their young to kill uppity Untermenschen by night, were nothing that I recognised as my own; nor were those of Caesar, who was reported to have killed a million Gauls, and enslaved a million more. It was not just the extremes of callousness that unsettled me, but the complete lack of any sense that the poor or the weak might have the slightest intrinsic value.

Why did I find this disturbing?

Because, in my morals and ethics, I was not a Spartan or a Roman at all. That my belief in God had faded over the course of my teenage years did not mean that I had ceased to be Christian. For a millennium or more, the civilisation into which I had been born was Christendom. Assumptions that I had grown up with – about how a society should properly be organised, and the principles that it should uphold – were not bred of classical antiquity, still less of ‘human nature’, but very distinctively of that civilization’s Christian past.

So profound has been the impact of Christianity on the development of Western civilisation that it has come to be hidden from view. It is the incomplete revolutions that are remembered; the fate of those which triumph is to be taken for granted.

(xxviii-ix)

If opponents of abortion were heirs of Macrina, who had toured the rubbish tips of Cappadocia looking for abandoned infants to rescue, then those who argued against them were likewise drawing on a deeply rooted Christian supposition: that every woman's body was her own, and to be respected as such by every man. Supporters of gay marriage were quite as influenced by the Church's enthusiasm for monogamous fidelity as those against it were by biblical condemnations of men who slept with men. To install transgender toilets might indeed seem an affront to the Lord God, who had created male and female; but to refuse kindness to the persecuted was to offend against the most fundamental teachings of Christ. In a country as saturated in Christian assumptions as the United States, there could be no escaping their influence – even for those who imagined that they had.

Even in Europe – a continent with churches far emptier than those in the United States – the trace elements of Christianity continued to infuse people’s morals and presumptions so utterly that many failed even to detect their presence. Like dust particles so fine as to be invisible to the naked eye, they were breathed in equally by everyone: believers, atheists, and those who never paused so much as to think about religion. Had it been otherwise, then no one would have ever got woke.

(517)

The challenge:

We are no longer radically distinctive

Our “good works”, even when we have them, are no longer striking



CART (0)

"THE LORD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS  
COLORWAYS"

BOOK MERCH NEWSLETTER

*Let He Who Is Without Yeez  
First Stone*

**DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE CHURCH HAS  
BECOME JUST A PERFORMANCE?**



preachersns • Following  
preachersnsneakers • A  
this heat killin the coron  
once and for all  
35w



preachersns • Following ...  
preachersnsneakers •  
Pastor Adam Smalcombe  
rocking the pocket rocket  
Guccis  
79w



Calling  
Celebrity  
Character  
Charisma  
Christian  
Competence

This is an alphabetical list, your challenge is to put them in order of priority for:

Group A – Christian leading in a secular organisation

Group B – Christian leading in a Christian organisation

Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*, 35-39, esp. 39.

‘Most of us still feel that, ideally, we should have been able to do it all and do it successfully. Stardom and individual heroism, which are such obvious aspects of our competitive society, are not at all alien to the Church. There too the dominant image is that of the self-made man or woman who can do it all alone.’

The challenge:

We are programmed and pressured to prioritise celebrity over competence, charisma over character and, as a result, the only thing that's really "spectacular" are the failures and the falls

Odd but not different

Closing reflection  
and discussion:

- Take a few minutes to reflect on the contextual challenges we face:
- Are the different challenges in your context that have been missed?
- How might Christian leadership develop to serve these unique contexts?